

WYCLIFFE COLLEGE LIBRARY



3 1761 02870 5853

HISTORY  
OF EARLY  
CHRISTIANITY



LEIGHTON  
PULLAN



LIBRARY

*Stack*  
**Wycliffe College**

TORONTO

Shelf No. **BS 2410 P96**

Register No. **9030**







THE  
HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

*Uniform with this Volume*

## THE POPULAR BIBLICAL LIBRARY

A Series of Handbooks on the Bible, Full Crown  
8vo, Cloth, Price 3s. 6d.

*NOW READY*

Vol. I. THE HERODS, BY DEAN FARRAR.

Vol. II. WOMEN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

BY THE REV. R. F. HORTON, M.A., D.D.

Vol. III. THE HISTORY OF EARLY  
CHRISTIANITY,

BY THE REV. LEIGHTON PULLAN, M.A.

*To be followed by Volumes of a similar character by*

Professor A. H. SAYCE, M.A.

Canon RAWLINSON.

Principal WHITEHOUSE.

Professor IVERACH, D.D.

Professor PATERSON, B.D.

and other Writers

# The History of Early Christianity

BY

LEIGHTON PULLAN, M.A.

FELLOW AND LECTURER OF ST JOHN BAPTIST COLLEGE, OXFORD  
LECTURER IN THEOLOGY AT ORIEL COLLEGE AND QUEEN'S COLLEGE

*"I enquired into the sayings of the ancients."*

—PAPIAS, *bishop of Hierapolis*, A.D. 125

London  
SERVICE & PATON

5 HENRIETTA STREET

1898

4570090 ✓

## P R E F A C E

---

THIS volume is intended as a defence of orthodox Christianity: with this object in view the period from A.D. 29 to 190 has been selected. It has for many years been conceded by intelligent opponents of orthodox Christianity that by A.D. 180 or 190 orthodoxy was in possession of the field. The Divinity of Christ, the unique value of our four Gospels, a creed resembling our Apostles' Creed, were then only disputed by men who were in open antagonism with the Church (*see* Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, p. 503).

But the opponents of orthodoxy have begun to admit that it is impossible to regard orthodoxy as a mere product of the controversies which were rife between A.D. 120 and 160. Nothing can be more striking than the recent admission of Prof. Harnack in his *Chronologie der Altchristlichen Litteratur*, B. i. pp. viii., xi.

“The oldest literature of the Church is, in the main points and in most of its details, from the point of view of literary history, veracious and trustworthy. . . . He who attentively studies these letters (*sc.* of Clement and Ignatius) cannot fail to see what a fulness of traditions, topics of preaching, doctrines, and forms of organisation already existed in the time of Trajan, and in particular Churches had attained to fixity.”

I believe that this concession will prove fatal to any but an orthodox account of the belief of the primitive Church. For if Catholic orthodoxy is as old as the time of Trajan (A.D. 98-117) there can be no absurdity in believing that it is as old as the time of the apostles. The great learning which has placed Prof. Harnack at the head of the so-called "liberal" school of theology has not restrained him from making statements which are obviously intended to save the position of his own school of thought. In this book I have frequently criticised these statements. If my criticisms are just, they will serve to demonstrate that orthodox Christianity is original Christianity.

Prof. Harnack's *Dogmengeschichte* is appearing in an English translation with his special commendation. I have, therefore, in quoting that work, first made a reference to the third German edition of 1889 and immediately added the volume and page of the authorised English translation.

It is a pleasure to me to express my great obligations to Dr Sanday's *Gospels in the Second Century* and his lectures on *Inspiration*.

# CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. ROME AND HER RELIGION . . . .	1
II. THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH . . . .	24
III. ST PAUL AND THE LAW . . . .	52
IV. ST JOHN AND THE CHURCH OF ASIA . . . .	73
V. CHURCH AND STATE . . . .	101
VII. SUCCESSORS OF THE APOSTLES . . . .	121
VII. ROME AND ST PETER . . . .	144
VIII. DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH . . . .	168
IX. JUDAISTIC CHRISTIANITY . . . .	193
X. THE Gnostics . . . .	218
XI. THE CHURCH AND THE GOSPELS . . . .	242
XII. THE CHURCH AND THE MINISTRY . . . .	264
XIII. CHRISTIAN WORSHIP . . . .	280
CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE . . . .	294
INDEX . . . .	299





# THE HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### ROME AND HER RELIGION.

#### § 1. *The Roman Empire.*

ST LUKE, in speaking of the birth of Jesus Christ, and of the preaching of St John the Baptist, throws that birth and preaching into high relief by mentioning the names of the contemporary Roman emperors, men who had little in common with the new-born King. And when we contemplate the way in which God fulfilled in time His eternal plans for our salvation, we see with what fitness it was that the Saviour was born when and where He was born. The world had ripened for His coming. One great empire was imposing with some roughness, but with no little justice, a rule of peace on many nations. Intercourse between one people and another was no longer by necessity an intercourse of war and hatred. One delicate and expressive language—the Greek—was becoming the language of this intercourse, and was the medium of a great commerce of ideas. Old creeds were wearing out, and new philosophies were weaving webs of thought which suggested a protection against the chills of life, but could not really clothe the human soul with righteousness. And a hope had come that the mysterious East might offer consolation to the tired, and pardon to the sinful.

## 2 HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

The extent of the Roman Empire is something which it is very difficult for us to realise. In A.D. 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed, and all men could see that Judaism and Christianity were detached from one another, the Roman Empire included thirty-six provinces, and stretched from Southern Britain to Armenia. It included London, Cologne, Paris, Cordova, Carthage, Alexandria, Damascus, Smyrna, and the town which we call Constantinople but which was then named Byzantium. Chester and Lincoln were the two most northerly points held by Roman troops, whose comrades were stationed in Egyptian towns "half as old as time." The Emperor Augustus had instituted a vast system of political reform to which his successors had generally adhered. Augustus made a united Italy, and stimulated a patriotism for Italy which could not be dissociated from devotion to himself. His name and victories were so continually in the festivals and in the worship of the people, that the measures were comprehended in the man. He bound the middle classes to himself by offering them prefectures and governorships; he encouraged guilds which might further the interests of the populace, and while he controlled the power of the aristocratic senate, he consoled its pride with outward splendours.

The provinces were prosperous, and though the three immediate successors of Augustus and of his adopted son Tiberius were men of inferior calibre, the empire was tranquil and wealthy. Actual misgovernment was rare, irritation against the government was seldom felt, except by half-civilised peoples in the extreme East and North. Spain and Gaul were being rapidly Romanised, and although Asia Minor was more independent of Rome both in its culture and its government, general contentment reigned.

With the Flavian and Antonine Cæsars (69 to 193 A.D.) the Roman Empire entered upon the second stage of its development. The authority of the emperor, instead of

being a purely personal office, was now represented as an authority which he could transmit, and which he derived by a hallowed continuity. The age enjoyed and abused the blessings of cosmopolitanism. The Greek language was no longer held in check, and spread a uniform and somewhat artificial culture. The writers of Latin forsook the vigour and directness of the Ciceronian period—they became Euphuists, who constructed a literary mosaic of precious archaisms and effective novelties. A dislike of civic obligations was increasing, and the municipal offices, which had been an honour, were at the end of the 2nd century an acknowledged burden. The Romans could lean upon legions recruited from the hardy races on the frontiers, and after 180 they began the disastrous policy of transplanting barbarian tribes to the Roman side of the border to defend their masters. The Romans needed a new sense of honour, a new fire of originality, a new birth.

Of the moral condition of the Roman Empire we must not speak with any arrogant confidence. Virtue is like some gentle flower which lingers in many a secluded vale, when it has been extirpated by the high roads. And there are facts to show us that the health and fibre of the old Roman temper were not extinct. Roman morals during the 1st century of Christianity must not be judged entirely by the Satires of Juvenal, any more than English virtue of the 18th century must be judged entirely by the Caricatures of Hogarth. Nevertheless, the morals of the Roman world were in a state of decadence. The unique supremacy of the Roman state encouraged a spirit of political laxity and indifference. The same decadence repeated itself within the Christian State during the Middle Ages, when the position of the popes seemed so thoroughly secure that they began not only to be at ease in Zion, but even to traffic in the highest blessings of religion. The Roman State could be careless of criticism. The emperor could snap his fingers at the comments passed upon his actions

#### 4 HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

by any earthly potentate. So the grave of patriotism was dug by the want of opposition from rivals without, and by the selfish omnipotence of the emperor within.

Slavery was another curse. If we could awake suddenly in the Rome of the days of Nero, one of the first causes of our astonishment would be to discover what a number of the persons whom we saw were slaves. The life of a Greek citizen, with all its pleasant correspondence with environment, had rested on the basis of a large slave class. Plato and Aristotle would have been almost unable to think of a city which had not trains of slaves who were nothing more than the breathing instruments of their masters' wills. The case was worse at Rome during this period. In early days the slaves at Rome were comparatively few. The increase of luxury, and the absorption of small country farms into huge estates worked by slave labour, caused the number to swell almost beyond calculation.

The great Roman families numbered their slaves by thousands. Some were skilful and astute, especially if they were slaves imported from the more cultured districts of the East, and such men often won their masters' confidence and their own freedom. If remarkable for their versatility or beauty, they fetched enormous prices. They ministered to the idlest and most demoralising extravagance. The number of servants divided out among the wants of a Hindu prince does not equal the population which was required in a stately Roman household. A gentleman would keep a slave whose work in life was to put on his boots, and a lady would keep a slave devoted to the duty of rouging her face.

If they were freed, they were unable to free themselves from the influences which they had assimilated and the arts which they had practised. If they remained in slavery, their mere existence encouraged the sense of irresponsibility which was rotting the consciences of their imperial and noble owners. In Rome the evils of slavery were equalled by

the mischief caused by a class of professional idlers. Rich and notable men prided themselves upon the possession of a retinue of dependents. Decayed gentlemen, poets, and the professors of the thousand little arts and crafts which cater for the amusement or pride of the wealthy, became the *clients* of the patron who paid them best. To gain a present or a post, no efforts were untried. The business-like client spent a large part of the day visiting one patron after another, bribing slaves if necessary, stooping to the most nauseous flattery, and departing from each with a dole of money.

The vulgar display which this system fostered was of a piece with the luxury of the times. The insolent extravagance of the rich, and the grinding poverty of the poor, was not unlike the state of affairs that made the French Revolution possible. Political corruption was matched by social and domestic corruption. In speaking of the Greeks, some modern writers have been too ready to speak of their art and moral temper as bright, clear-defined, unerring. Nor should we wish to under-value Greek forethought, temperance, and beauty. But we must remember that the fair Greek cities were often a moral chaos, and that, even in the pages of the Greek philosophers, there are lines which startle us like some grey and ghastly apparition at a wedding feast.

The Romans had not that good taste, that sense of exquisite proportion, which had done something to curb and guide the morality of Greece. Their character was more resistless and more unshaped. They were quickly demoralised by great success. They held human life too cheap, as is proved by the fact that the whole population of Rome gloated over the gladiatorial shows. The Italian towns contained barracks for the training of the victims of this inhuman fashion. At Rome they fought by hundreds, or even thousands, at a single show, and to "give the people a hundred couples" of gladiators was a well-known method

## 6 HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

of gaining popularity. We cannot wonder that a people which delighted in such ignoble war became cruel and reckless, passionately addicted to sensational amusement. The theatre was foul and degrading, and its realism reproduced itself in private life.

In the old knightly days of Rome, marriage had been sacred. It now was a mere matter of convenience. A general disinclination for marriage was accompanied by a general willingness for divorce. The chivalrous respect for wife and mother was fled; home ceased to be a holy spot, a vestal shrine. Women "cheapen'd Paradise," forgetting that men will value them at the price which they set upon themselves, and proved their worthlessness by marrying in order to secure an easier field for sin. With the lack of true faith and love between man and woman came the outbreak of every wayward, hideous passion. St Paul in his *Epistle to the Romans* has sketched the grim lineaments which were often seen in heathen life. It was a life that was losing purity and power, and growing incapable of compassion or remorse.

### § 2. *The Old Roman Religion.*

The old religion of Rome, which is reflected in the calendar which tradition ascribed to King Numa, was connected with habits which were simple, temperate, and sweet. But it was less a religion of belief than a religion of usages and sentiments. It originally consisted mainly in the worship of the dead, which was the religion of the family, and the worship of Jupiter and Mars, which was the religion of the community. The year began with the month of March; it belonged to Mars, the god of the infant warrior nation, and the father of him who founded Rome. All the festivals which were dedicated to him were municipal and military festivals, days for horsemanship and feats of arms.

Jupiter is the god of a people which depended not only upon success in war, but success in agriculture. His three festivals show that he was originally, in a special sense, the god of vintage. They were the *Vinalia* of 23rd April, when the new wine was first tasted; the *Vinalia* of 19th August, when his aid was asked for the preservation of the grapes; and the *Meditrinalia* of 11th October, when the vintage was over. A large proportion of the other festivals was devoted to the divinities which presided over country life. In April *Tellus*—the earth itself—was worshipped, and then *Pales*, who guarded the flocks. In August, prayers were addressed to *Consus* and *Ops*, who protected the garnered corn. In December these same gods were again invoked to foster the seed which had been sown in the earth.

The gods beset men at every turn, and we cannot doubt that this did much to make life seem serious and sacred. There were important popular festivals in honour of the gods of the fields, and villages, and streets, and hills—festivals which seem ultimately connected with the geographical subdivisions of the people. Such were the *Ambarvalia* of 29th May—a rustic holiday, which has survived in a Christian form in our Rogation Day processions. The month of July, in particular, was devoted to the worship of the small divinities of the woods and streams, the fairies who retreat so slowly before the dawn of knowledge. The chief motive for the worship of such beings was less the desire of friendship with the gods, than the desire of preventing any mischievous advances which the gods might make. A multitudinous throng of trivial deities necessarily detracts from a sustained and virtuous devotion.

The household gods of the old Roman religion were especially numerous. With fierce genius the great Christian writer, Tertullian,\* parades the names of the deities who watched over a Roman infant—deities which

---

\* *Ad Nat.*, ii. 11.



were themselves created from the words which describe the various stages of an infant's nurture. There was Sentinus, who presided over the infant's arrival at sentient life; Candelifera, over the first candlelight which it beheld; Edulia and Potina, over its eating and drinking; Cunina, over its slumbers in the cradle; Farinus, over its first efforts at talking; Statina, over its first attempt at standing. Tertullian remorselessly goes on and asks how many gods he is to bring out, old or young, male or female, gods of the urban districts, or gods of the rural districts. Nor does he fail to lash the foulness of these godlings. Every desire and every vice had in Tertullian's time been counted worthy of an apotheosis, and it was not wonderful that the Christians protested against evils which were so monstrous that a pagan writer says that men offer prayers to the gods when they would blush to find that a man had overheard these prayers.

A better aspect of Roman religion was to be seen in the reverence which it fostered for home and family. For Roman religion was not only a vehicle by which each generation passed onward to the next age its own conduct and ritual; it was also a means by which the living remained in communion with the dead. The dead were regarded as holy and divine. It was not necessary to have lived a virtuous life, for all the dead were deified. Cicero says: "Our ancestors wished that the men who had departed from this life should be counted among the gods." \* The Romans gave these departed spirits the names of *Lares*, *Manes*, *Genii*. "Those whom the Greeks call dæmons we call Lares." † But although all the dead were regarded as gods, those who had been malevolent in life were regarded as malevolent after death, and were distinguished from the good. Apuleius ‡ says: "Our ancestors believed that the Manes, when malicious, ought to be called Larvae, and they

---

\* *De Leg.* ii. 22.

† *Timæus*. 11.

‡ *De Deo Socr.* 15.



called them Lares when they were benevolent and propitious.\* The mischievous spirits were also known by the name of Lemures.

Every year and every day was affected by the worship of the dead, and this worship had such a hold on Roman life that it was not until A.D. 392—about seventy years after Christianity had become the official religion of the Roman Empire—that Theodosius ventured to forbid the worship of the old domestic gods, “the Lares by fire, the Genius with wine, the Penates with sweet incense.” In earlier times the dead were buried close to the house, and when this practice was forbidden, the wax masks of the deceased were set in cases round the atrium. In great houses images of the Lares were placed in private oratories, which were thrown open on occasions of family rejoicing. The Lares were specially worshipped on three days in each month, and the Lemures on three nights in the month of May, when black beans were given to the spectres. The greatest importance was attached to all offerings to the dead, for if the dead were left hungry they would leave their graves, wail in the night, and send sterility and disease. To avert these disasters every Roman family daily set aside some fragments of its repast for the refreshment of its members in the other world.

Besides the *Lemuria*, devoted to the propitiation of the Lemures, the Romans observed the following festivals in honour of the dead :—

(1) The *Parentalia* (13th-20th February) and *Feralia* (21st February). The former were devoted to the Manes, and the latter to parents who had become divine by death. All citizens observed these days, and the temples were shut and weddings forbidden. The State also observed the *Caristia* (22nd February), when the members of every family kept

---

\* Serv., *ad Aen.* iii. 63, calls the Manes harmful, though he thinks that the name means “good.”

## 10 HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

festival together and worshipped the family gods and the *Numen* of the emperor.

(2) The *Feriae Denicales*. This festival was held after the funeral of a dead relative when the mourning was over.\* The dead were no longer mourned, but worshipped with sacrifices. This private festival was connected with the private *Parentalia*, which was kept on the anniversary of the death of a relative.

(3) The *Rosaria* and the *Dies Violae* were days on which the family made offerings of roses and violets at the tombs of the dead outside the city walls. These graceful festivals naturally assumed an almost public character.†

It may easily be imagined that a people which held its forefathers in such veneration, and which allowed the father of a family a tyrannical power over his children,‡ would attach great importance to ancestral forms of worship. The religion of Rome, like that of Greece, was peculiarly cherished on account of its being ancestral. The philosophic opponents of Christianity show no disposition to abandon this idea. The Neo-Platonist Porphyry says: "This is the greatest fruit of piety, to honour the Divine according to ancestral use,"§ and Caecilius, the Roman opponent of Christianity, is represented by Minucius Felix|| as urging that it would be better to "receive the instruction of our ancestors, and to observe the traditional rites." Hence the religion of Rome was intensely national. It prided itself upon its continuity and gloried in its establishment. It existed for the welfare of the State as much as

---

\* Cic., *de Leg.* ii. 22.

† The early Christians refused to put garlands on the graves of the dead, as this act was considered to imply the worship of the dead.—Minucius Felix, *Octav.* 12 (2nd century).

‡ Romans treated their children with great cruelty, often training them for the vilest purposes. Justin, *Apol.* i. 27; Tert., *Apol.* 9, accuses magistrates of killing and exposing their children (*cf.* Plin., *Ep.* x. 71; Sen., *de Ira.* i. 15). A true regard for childhood began with Christianity.

§ *Ad Marcell.* 18.

|| *Octav.* 5.

for the honour of the gods. Its observance was the duty of every citizen, and its neglect by one member of the commonwealth might call down the wrath of Heaven upon the whole body. So powerful was this belief, that even when men of the educated classes held the religion of their forefathers in contempt, they were willing to conceal the opinions of an atheist under the vestments of a pontiff. This principle of smiling upon superstition was recognised throughout the Roman Empire, and we find Plutarch advising cultured magistrates to encourage the public festivals, for the multitude is strengthened in its faith when it sees men of rank in the city uphold divine worship and expend something on it.\*

The theory that the Roman religion was above all things a State religion was pressed with thorough logic. Conformity was valued far more than conscience, and the individual was not allowed to encroach upon the stability of public order by any private sentiments. Roman religion only moved with the moving exigencies of the State. The result was a combination of two different, but not necessarily opposed, principles. On the one hand, Roman religion remained as rigid as the idea of an ancient nationality demanded; on the other hand, it became as elastic as the needs of a widening empire required.

(1) Thus, for instance, as Rome enjoyed mercantile intercourse with foreign nations, and made new conquests, new gods were admitted into the national worship. As a polytheist, the Roman had no scruple in adoring a dozen new divinities. In this way the pantheon gradually became a caravanserai. The avarice of a Verres might despoil a vanquished city of the statues of its gods, but policy dictated that conquered deities should receive recognition and shelter. If the senate gave its approbation, the executive could incorporate a new cult into the national worship.

---

\* Plutarch, *Præc. ger. reip.* 30.

## 12 HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

“The one remains, the many change and pass.” In this way all the great gods of Greece were at an early date numbered among the gods of Rome. In religion and in art the Greek goddesses, Artemis and Demeter, appeared under the old Italian names of Diana and Ceres. As early as B.C. 432, a temple was begun at Rome in honour of Apollo, and on the occasion of an epidemic, in B.C. 399, he was solemnly adored with Latona and other foreign deities. He remained a purely Greek god—the god of music, healing, and divination—and yet Augustus gave him a place with Jupiter of the Capitol. The foreign gods were honoured with games, and their worship superintended by Roman pontiffs. The only distinction made between the foreign gods and the original deities of Rome was, that the former were not allowed to have statues in the pomerium unless they were identified with one of the original gods of Rome, and also that they were not allowed a place in the official calendar. Their days were not called *nefasti*—days on which a magistrate could not judge a case—but these days received all the attributes of a public festival except the name.

(2) When the form of the constitution changed, there came the deification of the emperor. “You worship Caesar,” writes Tertullian, “with greater awe than Olympian Jove himself.” This deification was partly of Oriental origin. The Egyptians venerated, by their kings, the successive incarnations of Ra, the sun. Philip and Alexander claimed the highest divine honours after their conquests; the same claim was made by the successors of Alexander both in Egypt and Syria, and a fully organised worship was instituted in their honour. The Romans found this worship when they obtained possession of these regions, and the Roman emperors saw that such practices would be for the imperial profit. At the same time, we must observe that this deification fitted naturally with the Roman idea of religion—for religion was the most effective bond of the

State, and all the chief offices of the State were concentrated in one man. It was therefore not astonishing that he who stood in the front of society should be regarded as somebody more sacred than the other members of society, even during his own lifetime.

Certainly this was the case even with Julius Caesar. During his lifetime his ivory statue was placed among the statues of the gods, and a month was called by his name, as though he were on a level with Mars. The comet which appeared after his death was regarded by the populace as a symbol of his divinity, and he received from the senate and people the title of *Divus*, which was the designation of a man who has become a god, as distinct from *Deus*, the designation of a god who has always been a god. In the time of Augustus the worship of a Roman ruler became a serious reality. Under the mask of moderation Augustus not only permitted the erection of provincial temples in his own honour, but gave his worship a direct impulse. He jested about his altar at Tarragona,\* but before he died he was worshipped from Gaul to Samaria. The obelisk which now stands upon the Thames Embankment is one of the antiquities which adorned the Augusteum of Alexandria. When he died he was officially deified with every sign of homage, and while his body was burned upon a towering pyre, a live eagle carried his sacred soul to Heaven. This sublime ceremony was so agreeable to Roman taste, that until the emperors became Christian an eagle seldom failed to be present at an imperial funeral.†

The emperors generously extended the attributes of deity to members of their family. Nero, having caused the death of his wife, Poppaea, by a kick, ordered her to be worshipped as *Diva Poppaea Augusta*.‡ Commodus allowed fire to be carried before his sister, Lucilla, as though she

---

\* Quintil., *Inst. orat.* vi. 3.

† Dio Cassius, lvi. 42 ; Herodian, iv. 2.

‡ Tac., *Ann.* xv. 23 ; Suet. *Ner.* 35.

## 14 HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

were a goddess, and the virtuous Marcus Aurelius obtained divine honours for his shameless wife, Faustina. Marcus Aurelius was adored by people of every rank, and the Roman whose house was without his image was accounted a blasphemer.\* Gibbon, who regards the religious motives of pagans and Christians with equal scepticism, speaks of the deification of the emperors as "an institution, not of religion, but of policy." But the worship of a good emperor may have often been sincere. It is true that it had its roots in the primitive ideas that any dead man was more or less divine, and that the Church was an aspect of the State, but the men who adored the good Marcus Aurelius long after he was dead, cannot have done so from motives of policy.

There is another fact connected with the apotheosis of the emperors which must not pass unnoticed. It helped to break down the very idea of nationality from which it was derived. A national religion is a local religion, and the great majority of Greeks and Romans, until the time of Augustus, believed only in a local religion. The idea of a religion which would be binding upon all men, and be unaffected by change of circumstance and climate, was foreign to their minds. But after Julius Caesar had summoned all eyes to study his unique personality and position, the notion of a world-religion became more natural. The worship of the Caesars spread from province to province, and weakened the local forms of worship. It laid down no new rule of life, and it tended to become less religious and more civil, so that in the 4th century after Christ, an imperial temple was little more than a town hall.† But in the meanwhile, even the most ignorant of men had grown familiar with a universal worship, and the devotional

---

\* Capitolinus, *Marc. Aur.* 18.

† The last temple dedicated to an emperor was probably the round temple which now serves as a vestibule to the Church of SS. Cosmas and Damian. The inscription bears the name of Constantine, but makes no allusion to his divinity.

instincts which had been diverted towards a Commodus could be claimed for Christ.

### § 3. *The New Roman Cults.*

The old Roman religion—the “religion of Numa”—had been entirely changed in spirit and in appearance before the end of the Republic. Some of the old gods could scarcely be recognised in their Greek dress. Some were forgotten or ignored. The ancient festivals were now regarded as commemorating episodes either in the history of the nation or in the history of gods to whom Greek mythology had given an entirely new vivacity. It was forgotten that the festivals were chiefly festivals of nature. The establishment of the empire under Augustus introduced another change. Public festivals—days which were *nefasti*—were introduced to commemorate events of the emperor’s life. These days were so numerous that, in A.D. 70, under Vespasian, a commission was appointed to revise the calendar, and, so far as we are able to tell, the festivals were reduced to the limited number observed in ancient times. Retouched by the antiquarian zeal which had animated Augustus, and which also animated his successors, the primitive rites of Rome became popular once more, and spread both in the West and East of the empire. But these rites could not satisfy the aspiration or remove the melancholy of so civilised an age. And, in consequence, we find that strongly Oriental cults, which were offered to deities with a clearly defined personality, were enthusiastically adopted in Rome.

An instance of this is to be found in the popularity of the Egyptian goddess, Isis. Tiberius and Augustus had tried to crush the worship of this goddess, who was especially regarded as the patroness of artists and sailors, but was also much invoked by the weaker sex. The part which women were allowed to take in her ceremonies was one great



reason for the increase of this devotion. A statue which is preserved in the Vatican shows that it became usual to clothe the goddess like a Roman matron, while she still retained the old barbaric sistrum in her hand. On 5th March, we might have witnessed, in many towns, a long litany of the devotees of Isis passing through the narrow streets, with innumerable lights, and the twangs of the sistrum. There would be women to scatter flowers, and a choir of musicians and singing boys, followed by the tire-women of the goddess, bearing the precious articles of her toilet. Next come the mirror-bearers, carrying mirrors of polished metal which reflect the face of the image to the eyes of the great procession which brings up the rear. The figure of the goddess, clad in a robe embroidered with the moon and stars, is upheld upon a platform, attended by a train of priests in robes of white. They bear emblem after emblem of their Eastern faith, and among them is a gilt and mystic ship, which they launch upon the shore, devoted to destruction, in the hope that Isis will protect all those in danger on the sea throughout the coming year. The procession returns to the temple, a reader recites prayers for the emperor, senate, people, and navy. The worshippers kiss the feet of a silver statue of the goddess, leave their flowers at her altar, and then depart.\*

Another popular worship was the cult of Cybele and Attis. The two deities became definitely associated in the same rites at Rome in the early days of the Christian Church. Their union was customary in Phrygia, where these rites originated. Phrygian traditions presupposed the existence of a great divinity of a complex essence, which was formed of the two sexes. At a later time, this deity was separated into *Agdistis* or Cybele, the female deity, and Attis, the male. Cybele was adored at Rome under the form of a dark and shapeless stone brought to the city in

---

\* See Apuleius, *Met.* xi.



B.C. 204, and still existing there about A.D. 400. Modesty forbids us to describe all the ghastly ceremonies which centred round the passion of the "Mother of the gods" for the fair youth, Attis. The chief festival was in March, and lasted almost without interruption from the 15th to the 28th. Early in the 3rd century the emperors themselves took part in it. Trumpets gave the signal for a melancholy lamentation over the god who flees from the distracted goddess, unsexed priests danced and gashed their bodies in their frenzied movements, and the festival ended with the ceremony of bathing the idol in a river and a general carnival of the populace.

In commemoration of the wounds of Attis, it was usual to offer the sacrifice of a ram, and in honour of Cybele, to offer the sacrifice of a bull. The latter sacrifice was known as the *Taurobolium*, and in order to purify their souls, the worshippers soaked themselves in the animal's blood. The inward desire of the human heart for an atoning sacrifice gave this religion of the shambles a great popularity. Prudentius,\* the Spanish Christian poet of the 4th century, has described a *Taurobolium* offered in honour of Cybele. Near her temple a ditch was dug, and the neophyte descended into it to the strains of music, magnificently clothed, and wearing a golden crown. Above the ditch, which was covered with perforated planks, a bull was led, whose horns were gilt, and his flanks laden with garlands. The temple attendants made the beast kneel down, and a priest cut a large wound in his neck, whence the blood flowed in streams. The neophyte, with extended arms, and head thrown back, endeavoured to prevent a drop of blood reaching the ground before it first touched his body. When he reappeared, streaming with "the quickening rain," he was regarded as "regenerate for eternity." After the sacrifice the officiating priest became the spiritual father of

---

\* *Peristeph.* x. 1022

the initiated, and marked him on the forehead with a sign of consecration. This baptism of blood might be received by proxy, for when Septimius Severus was suffering from gout, a Taurobolium was offered at Narbonne in Gaul, and the Augustal flamen received the shower of blood in his stead.

The Taurobolium was adopted into the cult of Mithra, an Eastern god who had been introduced into Rome during the century before the birth of Christ. In the religion of Zoroaster, this god appears as an ally of Ahura-Mazda, the divine principle of goodness and light. He was first the god of the heavenly light, and afterwards identified with the sun, and called "Rock-born," on account of his resurrection from the earth after the long winter nights. The name Mithra or Mitra signifies "friend," and denotes the kindly character of light. In the Vatican there is a group of sculpture which represents him as a beautiful youth, fully clad, wearing a Phrygian cap, and stabbing a bull in the neck. It was customary to use caves as sanctuaries of Mithra. Such a cave existed under the beautiful old church of San Clemente in Rome, and another was discovered at Spoleto in 1878. It is simply a long and narrow cavern, with adjoining rooms for the priests. At the end of the cave are niches for the statues of Mithra and his two torch-bearers, such as are represented in a monument now in the Louvre at Paris. In front of the niches was found a small altar with the words: "*Soli Invicto Mitrae Sacrum.*" In the Louvre monument the words: "*Deo Soli Invicto Mithr*" are carved on the bull which the god is slaying. While the chapels of Mithra bore no resemblance to a Christian place of worship, it appears that ceremonies were used which bore considerable resemblance to the rites of the Church. This was noticed by St Justin Martyr\* in the 2nd century, and a little later by Tertullian,† who asserts

---

\* *Apol.* i. 66.

† *De Praescr.* 40.

that the worshippers of Mithra are promised "remission of sins by baptism," and that an "oblation of bread" is made.

Much obscurity still involves many of the emblems and ceremonies of Mithraism. It is therefore still very difficult to determine whether the worshippers of Mithra deliberately imitated Christianity by borrowing such elements of Christian worship as were likely to make most impression upon the pagan mind. But it is certainly worthy of consideration that Justin, who is the earliest Christian writer who alludes to Mithraism, only mentions the bread and water of the Mithraic Eucharist; Tertullian, who wrote some years later, adds to this the mention of a Mithraic baptism, and St Augustine, some 200 years after Tertullian, says: "I remember that a priest of that god with the cap used at one time to say, 'Our god with the cap is himself a Christian,'"<sup>\*</sup> as though the Mithraists of his time disliked any barrier being made by the Christians against Mithraism. As Augustine has just spoken of heathens using the name of Christ in their incantations, it appears very probable that there was some gradually increasing imitation of Christianity in the worship of Mithra. Such instances of syncretism would be quite in harmony with the fact that some Mithraic monuments in Rome show the emblems of Mithra mixed with the emblems of other cults.

In the 4th century the great festival of Mithra, 25th December, was adopted by the Christians<sup>†</sup> as a fitting day for the celebration of the birth of the "Sun of righteousness." As a matter of fact, the festivals of the Oriental cults were so closely connected with the changes of nature, that they had the effect of restoring to Roman holidays an important element of their primitive character as festivals of nature, and thereby prepared for a transition towards the observance of Christian festivals. By the 4th century,

---

<sup>\*</sup> *In Johan.* i. Tract. 7.

<sup>†</sup> The first mention of it is in the Roman *Philocalian Calendar*, drawn up in A.D. 333. It was introduced at Antioch about 375.

## 20 HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

festivals connected with the family, or with the seasons, were the most popular. The personality of the god grew dim, the festival became neutral, and the Church gained by compromise.

We may conclude our account of the new Roman devotions by asking whether, in a more direct manner, they prepared the way for Christianity. The answer must be given in the affirmative, and for the following reasons.

(1) The new cults gave an impulse to a tendency towards Monotheism. The Oriental religions which flourished under the empire all possessed some god who was elevated far above the rest. It was not a hard and clear-cut Monotheism which these religions fostered, but it was a concentrated devotion. The sun pleased every sect. Jupiter, Apollo, Serapis, Attis, and Mithra, were all identified with the sun, the light of the world, and the source of life and goodness. All traditional religions were absorbed by this deity, who equally satisfied Apollonius of Tyana and the Emperor Aurelian. Even in the 4th century Constantine appears to have glided from the worship of the sun, whose name was inscribed on his coins, to the worship of the Saviour, whose monogram was carried on his banners. Julian combined the worship of the kingly sun with the elaborate metaphysics of Neo-Platonism, and with a morality learned from the Stoics, and stimulated by a knowledge of the Gospels.

(2) The new cults suggested a mediatorial religion. Celsus, who defends paganism against Christianity, recognises that there is only one supreme God. But he advises every race to preserve its traditional worship of its own gods. These gods are agents and representatives of the supreme Being; they are like the satraps or praetors entrusted with the several provinces of a great empire. In honouring them we honour the supreme Being.\* Maximus of Tyre explains this still further. We are incapable of knowing the essence

---

\* Origen, *c. Cels.* viii. 35, 37.

of the supreme God, but in order to approach Him we may avail ourselves of the help of symbolic representations. We name Him after all the beautiful creatures that we know. So the Greeks reach God through the art of Pheidias, the Egyptians by adoring animals.\* The mythology of the poets deals with the same truths as the meditation of the philosophers. Thus a pantheistic Monotheism, assuring everybody that all religions are equally good, and that a sublime philosophic truth is hidden in the worship of Apollo or a crocodile, prepared for its own downfall. The man who was convinced that God might be approached through Serapis could have no conscientious dislike to the theory that God might be found in Christ. This granted, he had to consider the fact that Christ had claimed to be the one perfect Mediator. If convinced that Christ and the Father "are one," he still retained a belief in mediatorial religion, but adopted an irreconcilable attitude towards the mediators of paganism. It is also evident that the great stress which the new cults laid upon rites of expiation and initiation made the worshippers familiar with the thought of guilt, of the possibility of reconciliation, and of a life of union with the Deity. Here once more Christianity won the day. The unequalled beauty of Christ's death, and the mystical simplicity of His sacraments, spoke to the human heart as never creed yet spoke.

(3) The organisation of the new cults prepared the ground for Christianity by breaking up the old idea that ministers of religion were simply ministers of the State. At Rome the priesthood was the post of a magistrate, and even two of the higher flamens were sometimes allowed to desert their sacred duties. The ceremony over, the priest returned to his secular calling. On the other hand, the clergy of the new cults were absorbed in their religious duties. This evidently gave them a considerable advantage from a religious point

---

\* *Dissert.* viii. 10.

of view. They carried on a propaganda, and had time for preaching and processions. The priests of Isis, with shaven heads and linen robes, worshipped in their temples every morning and every evening, and though in the 1st century A.D. the sanctuaries of Isis were not free from scandal, it appears that their reputation gradually improved. The unique liturgical possibilities of Christianity were in the meantime developing, and in the 4th century Julian endeavoured to make both the lives and liturgies of the pagan clergy of Greece as attractive as those of the Christian priesthood.

It is also worthy of remark that the new cults pressed into their service those who had hitherto been excluded from the higher functions of religion. The more important of the old Roman priestly colleges were confined to patricians ; but the new devotions opened the privileges of the priesthood to men of very humble origin. As Muhammadans, in India, give a welcome to men whose caste is too low for them to be influential among the Hindus, and whose character is too indifferent for them to win respect among the Christians, so it was with the worshippers of the new deities. Any one might find a home among the wandering priests of Cybele, or the confraternities which swept the temples of Isis, or carried her sacred baskets. Among them there were confraternities of women. Here again the Oriental priests were wise. They gave women as well as men the happiness of feeling that they had something serious to do. More than one Roman empress claimed and secured divine worship for her own person. But though it was not given to every woman to secure an apotheosis, any one might find room in one of the choirs of Isis—a deity who, like Mithra, promised to protect her children, not only here but in that unseen world towards which the thoughts of mankind were turning so wistfully in the 2nd century of the Christian era.

Certainly they are wayward and confused, these Eastern

faiths that were transplanted to Italian soil. There is something of fever and disease amid the tangled jungle which they form. And yet they stretch towards the light of true ideals, and through their glades are heard imperious echoes of the voice of God.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH.

#### § 1. *The Messiah.*

THE teaching of Jesus, with regard to His own Person and work, is sometimes stated to be no more than a combination of Jewish ideas concerning the Messiah. Of course there is a truth embedded in such statements. If He professed to be the Messiah, and believed that the Jewish religion had a special seal of divine authority, Jesus would necessarily employ these conceptions for the purpose of His mission. And on no hypothesis can such an action on His part be reasonably thought to diminish His originality. For originality is not merely the characteristic of those who have studied nothing or studied everything. It is in a peculiar sense the characteristic of those who mix themselves with whatever they take from others. Strength and charm are not so much the property of separate ideas and images as of these ideas and images when they are placed in perfect association. And he who can so arrange and combine the thoughts of others as to create a new and great impression upon the world, can, in the truest sense, claim that the result is his own. He is original and unique by virtue, not of the material which he has touched, but of the result which he has achieved.

It is not my purpose to attempt a full explanation of the claim which Jesus made upon the souls of His hearers. I wish rather to show that, in assuming or accepting such



titles as "Anointed," "King," "Son of David," "Son of Man," and "Son of God," He used terms which implied that He had the office and power of the Messiah, but that, while He appropriated several contemporary conceptions of the Messiah, He altered them fundamentally. The history of His temptation suggests to us that He deliberately repudiated the desire for that earthly glory which formed part of the Messianic ideal of His countrymen at the very beginning of His ministry. It is not possible for us to determine whether our Lord immediately before His Baptism studied any of those Jewish writings which endeavoured to supplement the Biblical doctrines about the Messiah. He lived much in Galilee, which was looked upon as less religious and less cultured than Judaea, and He was regarded by the Jews as destitute of an educational training.\* But whatever experience He had, or had not, of such writings, it can be shown that He laid emphasis on elements of Messianic doctrine which were repugnant to Jewish pride, and that He therefore appeared to the Jews to be too mean and humble for the true Messiah. At the same time He appeared to be too presumptuous for the true Messiah, because He declared that the relation between Himself and the Father was closer than even the highest Jewish doctrine had taught concerning the relation between the Messiah and God. Our canonical Gospels prove those facts abundantly, and also give indications of contemporary Jewish doctrines which agree closely with Palestinian Jewish documents.

The Hellenistic Judaism, which attracted some of the Jews in Palestine, and most of the Jews in Egypt, was adverse to the doctrine of a personal Messiah. Like the "reformed Judaism" of to-day, it was cosmopolitan, and exhibited itself as the most perfect form of "natural religion." While asserting that the Old Testament was the source of the truest knowledge of God, and convinced that

---

\* *St John* vii. 15.

an exact observance of the ancient ceremonial would find its reward in a better knowledge of its symbolical meaning, this Judaism was not the old Judaism. It had an enthusiasm for humanity and virtue, but, in becoming broad, it tended to become flat. A Judaism which did not always insist upon the circumcision of converts, and which regarded the material world with the suspicion of a Neo-Platonist is not the Judaism of the Law and the Prophets. In Philo especially, the Greek and the Jew were seriously at issue, although he was able to combine the two elements by maintaining that man, through purification of his affections and intellect, could reach to the threshold of God, while a full knowledge of God was only given in a state of ecstatic contemplation. Philo manifests no belief in a personal Messiah,\* still less does he identify the Messiah with that divine Logos, whom he regards as the operative reason of God and the spirit of the universe.

The immediate predecessors of Philo were probably affected by the same speculations. The *Book of Wisdom* may reasonably be assigned to the latter part of the 2nd century B.C. ; it bears the name of Solomon, but was written by some unknown writer who sometimes speaks with the voice of Plato, and sometimes with a force and melody which belong only to Israel. Here all expectation of the Messiah fades into a devout conception of the "glorious Kingdom," and the "beautiful crown" which the righteous dead shall receive from the Lord. They are destined to judge the nations, but there is no supreme judge who is to speak in the name of God.

The earliest *Sibylline Oracle* contains an apocalypse of the 2nd century B.C. It was composed by an Alexandrian Jew, who puts the prophecy into the mouth of the Erythraean sibyl. It contains a picturesque and dreamy description of the future reign of God—a description which reminds the

---

\* See *De Praem. et Poen.* § 16, on *Num.* xxiv. 7.

reader of some of the lines in Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*. The Messianic references have been disputed, but not successfully. The kings of the nations are to come up against Jerusalem, but a judgment from God with fiery swords and torches falling from heaven will overtake them, and universal peace will be established :—

“ And out of every land unto the house  
Of the great God shall they bring frankincense  
And gifts, and there shall be no other house  
To be enquired of by men yet to be,  
But whom God gave to faithful men's respect,  
Him mortals shall call Son of the great God ” (771-775).

Here we see a universal religion, and possibly a universal king, but the reading of the last line is too doubtful for us to be sure about the latter point.\* But a personal representation of God is certainly mentioned earlier in the book, for we are told that the land will lie waste for seven decades :—

“ And then will God send out of heaven a king,  
And judge each man in blood and light of fire ” (286-287).

It has been thought that this king is Cyrus. That is possible ; but it is not possible to hold that the author means to describe Cyrus when he speaks of the king out of heaven, and again means to describe Cyrus when he speaks of a king from the sunrise, who will establish peace (652). It seems more reasonable to hold that the former passage refers to the Messiah. The conception of his work is of the most meagre kind.

The *Psalter of Solomon* is now extant in Greek alone, but it was originally written in Hebrew, about B.C. 50. The conception of the Messiah is strong and attractive, and it combines, without developing, various conceptions which are found in the Old Testament. The Messiah is described as Son of David, and as “ a just king, taught of God.” In one verse he is called “ the Lord Christ.” It is generally

---

\* Alexandre, *Oracula Sibyllina*, p. 130 (Paris, 1869).

supposed that this is a mistranslation of Hebrew words which signify "the Christ of the Lord," and that the writer of this Psalter did not mean to give such a title as "Lord" to the Messiah. If the Greek is correct, it is probable that the phrase was suggested by *Psalms* cx. 1. Nevertheless, the *Psalter of Solomon* does not teach that the Messiah is divine, but that He is a human judge and a vassal king, gentle, holy, and sinless. He tends not his own, but Jehovah's flock : \*—

"For he will not trust in horse and rider and bow,  
Neither will he multiply for himself silver and gold for war,  
And from his navy he will not gather hopes for the day of war.  
The Lord Himself, his King, is the hope of him that is  
strong in the hope of God,  
And he will set all the nations before him in fear ;  
For he will smite the earth with the word of his mouth for  
ever ;  
He will bless the people of the Lord in wisdom with gladness,  
And he himself will be pure from sin to rule over a great  
people."

From this we may pass to the very Palestinian document known as the *Book of Enoch*.

One of the oldest references to the Messiah, outside the canonical books of the Old Testament, is probably that to be found in chap. xc. of the *Book of Enoch*. This apocalyptic book is a mine of valuable information concerning Jewish thought in the two centuries which preceded the birth of Christ. It combines writings composed at different periods, and the chapter just mentioned probably dates from B.C. 166. The Messiah is here represented symbolically as a *white bull*, whom all beasts and birds feared, and to whom they made petition. He seems to be only human, and appears only at the close of the world's history. He has no particular function to perform, and the poor idea of his office suggests to us that the glow of Messianic hope was almost extinct.†

---

\* Ryle and James, *Psalms of Solomon*, especially p. liv.

† Charles, *Book of Enoch*.

But just as the clash and trouble of the days of Isaiah and Micah taught religious minds to find shelter in the thought of a coming Saviour, so it was once more. Between the years 90 B.C. and 40 B.C., the degradation of the Asmonean dynasty, and the struggles with Rome, turned the hearts of the Jews towards the Messiah of whom the prophets had spoken. In the *Similitudes*, which form chaps. xxxvii.-lxx. of the *Book of Enoch*, and were probably written between B.C. 94 and B.C. 64, we find a remarkable anticipation of titles and conceptions which appear in the New Testament. The writer of the *Similitudes* describes the judgment and the transformation of the earth which will take place when the Elect One sits on the throne of glory. The name, Elect One, is applied to the Servant of Jehovah in *Isaiah* xlii., and is applied to Jesus in the New Testament. The author of the *Similitudes* then unfolds the judgment scene in *Daniel* vii., and afterwards depicts a universal resurrection. Now, in *Daniel* vii. 13, Israel is symbolically personified under the name of "Son of Man," and receives the kingdom which had belonged to four rapacious beasts. But in the *Similitudes*, it is a personal Messiah who bears this name, and this Messiah is represented, not indeed as divine, but as a supernatural person.

This Son of Man "has righteousness;" He is with God, and is seated by God upon His own throne. He will reveal all things, bringing to light everything that is hidden, and will recall the dead to life. He is selected by God to judge the world, and will slay the ungodly by the word of His mouth. He was named before the sun and the stars were made. This might only imply an ideal pre-existence, such as the Jews sometimes attributed to the Law, the early Christians to the Church, and the Muhammadans to the Kurân. It is very probably derived from Micah's words about the ruler from Bethlehem whose going forth was from ancient times. But from whatever source it is derived, it apparently passes into a notion of a personal pre-existence,

for it is said that before appearing to give judgment, the Son of Man was "concealed before" the Lord of Spirits. In spite of this concealment He was revealed to the elect by the spirit of prophecy, by which means the congregation of the elect was founded, although it was not to behold Him until the judgment. Such is the apparent meaning of the author, but the language which he uses is confused.

At the day of judgment "the kings, and the mighty, and the exalted" will set their hope upon the Son of Man and implore mercy from Him. But the Lord of Spirits will force them to depart. The righteous will be "saved," and "the Lord of Spirits will abide over them, and with that Son of Man will they eat and lie down and rise up for ever and ever." The author represents men coming to judgment from three places—earth, Sheol, and Abaddon. The last is the prison of the lost, and Sheol is the abode of the souls of the elect who receive their bodies from the earth in order to dwell upon it after its transformation. We should finally notice that the Son of Man does not appear to redeem but simply to judge, and that, nevertheless, it is not he but God who is represented in this crucial chapter as expelling the wicked into punishment.\*

Four titles given to the Founder of Christianity in the New Testament are in the *Book of Enoch*. They are "the Christ," "the Righteous One," the Elect One," and "the Son of Man." And it is the last title which our Lord preferred to use. The expression only occurs three times in the books of the New Testament which are not Gospels—in *Acts* vii. 56; *Rev.* i. 13; xiv. 14, and it is most frequent in the most Jewish of the Gospels—that according to *St Matthew*—where it occurs no less than thirty times.

In the New Testament it carries with it the same claim to universal power and judicial rights which it carries in *Enoch*. But without in the least disclaiming the idea of sovereignty

---

\* *Enoch* lxii. 10.

which the name bears in the Jewish apocalyptic story, Jesus lays emphasis upon a new kind of sovereignty. He uses it to show that He is a sovereign of another order. He reminds His disciples that, among the nations those who are *accounted* to rule the nations merely "lord it over them." But His disciples are to know that whosoever would become great among them should be their minister, and whosoever would be first among them should be slave of all; for verily the Son of Man—the true sovereign—came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.\* A ministering life and a vicarious death are henceforth to be the marks of the perfect King of Men. Christ completely unites the conception of the Son of Man as found in the *Book of Enoch* with the Isaianic conception of the meek and patient Servant of Jehovah. It is just this union of ideas which perplexed the hearers of Jesus. It made them ask: "Who is this Son of Man? We have heard out of the law that the Messiah abideth for ever."† They could not believe that the Messiah was to suffer and to die for others.

The passage which I have just quoted from the fourth Gospel is one of many verses in the New Testament which accurately illustrate contemporary Jewish thought concerning the Messiah. When taken together, these verses form a very powerful argument for the primitive date of our Gospels. After the struggle between Judaism and Christianity had fully begun, the Jews carefully emphasised the human aspect of their Messiah in opposition to the supernatural Messiah of the Church. It is even possible that this desire to emphasise the human character of the Messiah led certain Jews of the 2nd century A.D. to admit that He would suffer in the service of others. That they did admit it, seems proved by a saying of Rabbi Joses, the Galilean, which applies *Isaiah* liii. 6 to the Messiah,

---

\* *St Mark* x. 45.

† *St John* xii. 34.



and by a similar statement made concerning Jewish belief by Justin.\* At a later time official Judaism generally tended to deny that Messiah could suffer; and this is certainly the general attitude implied both in pre-Christian Jewish literature and described by the Evangelists (*St Matt.* xvi. 22; *St Luke* xviii. 34; *St John* xii. 34).

The Gospels also illustrate the two current opinions held by the Jews as to the origin of the Messiah. In *St Matt.* ii. 5, we find, as in the Jewish Targum on *Micah* v. 2, the belief that He will be born in Bethlehem. On the other hand, we find in *St John* vii. 27, as in the *Book of Enoch*, and in the *Fourth Book of Ezra*, the belief that the Messiah will suddenly appear from a state of concealment, having in some manner pre-existed with God. The New Testament contains several references to the belief recorded in the Mishna that Elijah would be the forerunner of the promised age, making peace by setting all disputes at rest. This coming of Elijah before the day of the Lord is foretold both in *Mal.* iv. 5 and *Ecclus.* xlviii. 10, though in the latter place the Messiah is not mentioned. Another saying preserved by the fourth Gospel is of peculiar interest. Many Jews expected that, before the Messiah came, there would appear a mysterious person called "*the prophet*," or "*the prophet like Moses*." This expectation was derived from the announcement in *Deut.* xviii. 15, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me." There is an allusion to this anticipation in no less than four places in this Gospel (i. 21, 25; vi. 14; vii. 40). Now, in these passages, such a mention of *the prophet*, without any further explanation, is quite natural on the lips of contemporary Jews, while any such phrase would be very unlikely to have been invented by a forger. The Christians identified this prophet with Christ Himself, and the identification is made in *Acts* iii. 22,

---

\* Justin, *Dial.* 68.



and by later Christian writers. But the Jews, in *St John's Gospel*, conceive of *the* Christ and *the* prophet as two different persons. We have, therefore, a distinctively Jewish conception faithfully here recorded in the fourth Gospel.

Now, while Jesus both claims to be the Messiah of the Old Testament, and also uses language which reminds us of Jewish literature not included in the Canon, we shall find that He modifies the Jewish ideals at almost every point.

We have already noticed that the old Messianic title, "Son of Man," is used by Him in such a way as to be hardly intelligible to His hearers. On His lips it carried more suggestions of the "man of sorrows" than of the "man of triumphs." Still greater reserve is shown in His use of the title "Messiah." After He had trained His disciples to understand Him, He drew out their belief with regard to His Person, and at Caesarea Philippi gained from them a clear declaration of His Messiahship.\* He accepted their confession, but immediately "charged them that they should tell no man." The purpose of our Lord in thus concealing His Messiahship is illustrated by the very next verse in *St Mark's* narrative, in which Jesus speaks of His coming rejection and death. The gulf which was fixed between the ideal cherished by the great majority of the Jews, and the plan determined by Himself, would have made a premature declaration of His Messiahship the greatest possible hindrance to the spiritual progress of His followers. They would have expected political domination and unlimited prosperity, and the question asked in *Acts* i. 6 shows that such expectations were only relinquished with the greatest reluctance. When the crisis came, and it was necessary either to publicly avow Himself to be the Messiah and die, or repudiate the Messiahship and save His life, our Lord showed no hesitation. He asserted His claim in the most

---

\* *St Mark* viii. 29.

serious and most positive manner, and in such a way as to suggest that He was not less than the Messiah, but more.

Jesus claimed to be not only the teaching Messiah, but also the reigning Messiah. He tacitly accepted the name of King, and expressly adopted it in the presence of Pilate. The Jews had two conceptions with regard to the nature of the Messianic reign. The first was that the rule of the Messiah would coincide with the complete renovation of the world. This idea occurs in *Enoch*, and seems to be reflected in *St John* xii. 34. But in the *Fourth of Ezra* the Messiah's reign is preparatory to a higher stage of glory, and the new world does not appear till that reign is over. Now, Christ taught that there were different stages in the new era. The first began with the gathering of the disciples round Him on earth; the last will be ushered in by His visible return. But through all its stages the Kingdom is His own.\* According to ordinary Jewish thought, God was the King. Even when the Messiah was called "King," He was regarded by the Jews as a viceroy. The Kingdom of God was therefore more important in Jewish eyes than the Messiah, and, consequently, we find that even Palestinian books, such as *Tobit* and 1 *Maccabees*, show no idea of a Messiah. On the contrary, Christ, while retaining the phrase, "Kingdom of God," never speaks of the heavenly Father as "King."† He assumes that He is Himself as truly King as God is King. The whole of the New Testament conception of the Kingdom is entwined with the earthly character, the present reign, and the future visible glory of Jesus.‡ The declaration of Jesus that the Kingdom of God is a present reality, was a decisive departure from Jewish ideas, and can only be understood in connection with His claim to be the reigning

---

\* *St Luke* xxiii. 3; xix. 15; *St Matt.* xxv. 34.

† There is a possible exception in *St Matt.* xxii. 2-13, but the use of the word King in *St Matt.* xxv. 34, makes the exception doubtful.

‡ The difference between the sensuous future kingdom expected by many Jews, and that promised by Christ, is well illustrated in *St Matt.* xxii. 30.

Messiah. It is therefore absurd for modern critics to maintain that Christ, in preaching the Kingdom of God, did not intend to make a recognition of Himself a condition of entrance into that Kingdom.

So with regard to His work of Judge. In *Daniel* and in *Enoch* the Son of Man shares in the divine work of judging the world. He is seated with "the Head of Days." But in the New Testament all the authority of judgment is entrusted to Him, and even in the synoptic Gospels we find no suggestion of the idea that the Father takes part in the final judgment; and instead of being a judgment of peoples and kings who were opposed to God and His representative, it is primarily a judgment of individuals. The moral element is enlarged, the national element is diminished.

That Jesus opposed the current Jewish theology when He asserted that the Messiah must die as a sacrifice for His people must be admitted without question. Our Lord never regards His death as a hindrance to His work. There is no reasonable ground for the assertion made by some critics to the effect that the prophecies of His death are interpolations into the Gospel story, and that He did not attribute any unique significance to His own heroic sufferings. The statements made by the four Evangelists, by St Paul, in the *Didache*, and other early writings, can leave no doubt that He instituted the Eucharist, and that, in so doing, He attributed to His death a sacrificial significance and the power of communicating spiritual life. The existence of the Eucharist is perhaps the strongest proof of what our Lord claimed to be. It implies that He claimed, as Messiah, a unique knowledge of the "Kingdom of God"; that He claimed to found a "new covenant" between God and man;\* that His blood atoned for sin like the blood of the Paschal lamb and like that of the ideal sufferer described in *Isaiah*; and lastly, that He communicates life to His disciples. The

---

\* See *Exod.* xxiv. 8, 11.

last fact is not simply deduced from *St John* vi. but from the general Biblical conception of blood, and, consequently, from every passage in which the Eucharist is described.

Jesus also detaches Himself from Jewish conceptions when He accepts or uses the title, "Son of God." By taking the various passages in which this title is used by Jesus or the apostles, by tearing them out of their context, and by comparing them with such parallels as occur in *Ps.* ii. and *Ps.* lxxxix., it may be possible to persuade ourselves that the title, "Son of God," means only a human Messiah. But that is bastard criticism. For if the method of our Lord was to change and blend the Jewish ideals into one sublime portrait, we should be prepared to find that the title "Son of God," like the title "Son of Man," bears a new meaning when He speaks. It does bear a new meaning, and this enables us to understand how He planted such a talent for obedience in His disciples, and such an ingenuity of hatred in His opponents. The high priest reckoned as blasphemy what Peter realised as the basis of religion, the unique, divine Sonship of Jesus. While He teaches us to say, "Our Father," Christ calls God in a special sense, "My Father which is in Heaven."\* And this leads us to consider a final contrast which exists between Jewish and Christian Messianic teaching.

We have seen that a few Jewish books represent the Messiah as existing in heaven with God before He is revealed to the world. But this pre-existence and revelation does not imply an incarnation, or anything like it. There is no idea of a divine Person humbling Himself by assuming flesh. A *man* exists with God, and suddenly appears as a man of might to vindicate the cause of God and establish

---

\* *St Matt.* xvi. 17. It is now a popular Rationalistic hypothesis that Jesus did not believe Himself to be the Messiah until His baptism; but the story in *St Luke* ii. 44*ff.* shows that even at the age of twelve, He was conscious of that peculiar relation to God which is implied in the words spoken from heaven at His baptism.

the religion of Israel. This idea has an apparent parallel in 1 *St Peter* i. 20, in which it is said that Christ was "foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times." These words, if isolated, have a Jewish look, but the rest of the Epistle shows a veneration of Jesus which would be idolatrous if it was not paid to a divine Person, and is incompatible with Jewish doctrine. And in *St John's Gospel* the pre-existence which is described in chap. iii. must be interpreted by the words in which Christ claims recognition as God, and says: "Before Abraham was born, I am."\* This does not mean an existence only in the promise of God, or that He existed as a man in heaven. For, in saying "I am," Christ claims that He exists eternally as God. His existence before Abraham is to be regarded as identical with His existence at the time of Abraham and since Abraham. It is this assertion which excites the indignation of the Jews, and it is difficult to see how it could have shocked them so much if they had thought that Jesus was only claiming a Messianic attribute. They oppose Him for claiming divine attributes, and although this claim is not heard in the synoptic Gospels as plainly as in *St John's Gospel*, it can be overheard in them perpetually. Christ, in the synoptic Gospels, trains the minds of His disciples in such a way that they are bound to ask how the Christ possessed a complete knowledge of the Father, and why a man's salvation is connected with his attitude towards the Christ.†

That they believed His authority to be rooted in an eternal past, is shown by the religious environment of St Paul. The apostle does not hesitate to teach that the Christ, before He became incarnate, possessed the attributes of God, and was the creative principle of the world. His descent into this world is therefore a "self-emptying," a profound humiliation,

---

\* *St John* viii. 58.

† See *St Matt.* xi. 27; *St Luke* x. 22; *St Matt.* xix. 28; *St Mark* viii. 35, 38.

the highest act of love. Courageous as the apostle undoubtedly was, he could not have been so daring as to publish these views about Him, of whom he says: "The second man is from heaven,"\* unless they had been acceptable to a large number of his readers, if not the whole number. And when we remember how much St Paul's doctrine of the incarnation diverges both from current Greek and current Jewish speculation, we shall find it easy to believe that he, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, was only unfolding what the words of Christ had implied or stated. The doctrine that the world was created by the Son of God—a doctrine found in *St John's Gospel* and in the *Epistles to Colossians, Ephesians, Hebrews*, and even in so early a document as *1 Corinthians* †—is a doctrine as alien to the whole mind of Judaism as the prediction that it would be necessary to drink the blood of the Messiah. But the distance which exists between these statements and the dogmas of Judaism is an adequate reason, not for doubting, but for believing, that they were taught by Him who said: "I and my Father are one."

We may conclude by saying that Christianity is often attacked by writers who maintain (1) that Christianity is based upon the conceptions which Christ had of His own Person and office—a fact which no Christian would deny—and (2) that these conceptions are only a combination of fantastic Jewish ideas more or less obviously false. But to seriously injure Christianity, it will be necessary to show that Christ has failed to fulfil His promises, or at least to show that the various elements which are comprised in His exposition of the Messiah's dignity remain inconsistent and warring elements in spite of the Master's efforts. In the meantime, there will be many who will retain an impregnable conviction that the Founder of Christianity, in fitting thought to thought, and virtue to virtue, showed a

---

\* 1 Cor. xv. 47.

† 1 Cor. viii. 6.

power which came down from the highest heaven of originality and truth.

§ 2. *The Church in Jerusalem.*

The birthday of the Christian Church was the day of Pentecost, in the year of our Lord 29. We may feel sure that primitive tradition was right in believing that it was a Sunday, and we may notice that this tradition corroborates the other great tradition that Christ died on Friday, 14th Nisan, for the day of Pentecost always fell seven weeks and two days after Passover. On the day that the Paschal lamb was slain, the true lamb of God gave up His life. On the day when the Jews commemorated the giving of the Law on Sinai, the Holy Spirit came with fire to write the new Law on the hearts of Christ's disciples.

If we desire to know the temper of that new and spiritual Jerusalem which was slowly rising within the grey walls of the holy city, we shall turn to the *Acts of the Apostles*. A few years ago this book was often represented as a historical picture, painted early in the 2nd century, in order to represent the dawn of Christianity as marked with unreal power and calm. Such an opinion is not really tenable. The style in which the book is written proves that *Acts* was written by the author of the third Gospel. In the latter part of the book the author speaks in the first person, and as a companion of St Paul. The author is therefore the man who writes *we* in this part of the book. It is extremely improbable that a writer of the 2nd century would have incorporated these passages without effacing the *we*. On the other hand, if he retained the *we*, the author would have probably made the companion of St Paul play a more important part in the story. The part of the book which describes the travels of St Paul contains so many accurate allusions to the government and geographical divisions of



Asia Minor, as they existed before A.D. 70, that it is impossible to deny its early character. Moreover, there is one celebrated manuscript, the *Codex Bezae*, which does represent a 2nd century version of the *Acts*. This version is earlier than A.D. 160, and was written by an intelligent man, who desired to make the narrative seem up to date. He apparently found the original text to be no longer quite intelligible to those who were acquainted with the divisions of Asia Minor, and this is a strong proof of the early date of the original document. It is very possible that the author of *Acts* used some Jewish Christian documents for the first twelve chapters of his book. These chapters are regarded as somewhat legendary, even by certain writers who think the later chapters are founded on a very primitive and trustworthy history. Such critics are not disposed to believe in the supernatural elements in the first twelve chapters. But their theory as to the book does not enable them to evade the supernatural; for in the passages which they admit to be genuine, there are statements which imply miraculous occurrences (xvi. 18, 26; xxviii. 8, 9).

The theological tone of chaps. i.-xii. is very strongly in favour of the historical worth of the narrative. It may be described as "neutral," not in the sense of being softened down, but in the sense of representing something behind later variations of doctrine. It is far less elaborate than the doctrine of St Paul's Epistles, but it furnishes no support to St Paul's Jewish opponents. And the fact that the book, to a considerable extent, balances St Peter with St Paul, giving them both a peculiar prominence, is by no means a proof of "free invention." We should not think of accusing a political historian of disingenuous conduct on the ground that, when writing a history of his own times, he had devoted a hundred appreciative pages to a Conservative statesman, and the same number of pages to an equally admired Liberal.

From *Acts* we can easily learn what was the faith of the



first "disciples" and "brethren" to whom the pagans of Antioch gave the appropriate name of "Christians." A Christian believes in the God of Israel, and accepts that preaching which is described as "preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ."\* He confesses that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, the Lord who has been raised from the dead and exalted to God's right hand, and will return to judge the world. By a sincere "change of mind" he both repents of the crime committed against the Messiah, and of all the sins which he himself has committed.† He adores Christ and calls upon His name, and is baptised into that name,‡ and thus confesses his entire dependence upon Christ, and becomes a member of the community of His disciples. Being baptised he has that "remission of sins"§ which is given in and through Christ alone.|| He receives the Holy Spirit, who comes upon him from without, and abides with him, always strengthening his character, and frequently manifesting Himself in visible signs of a more or less miraculous character.¶

In this belief the position occupied by the Christ is essential. Salvation and the assurance of being accepted by God are bound up with Him. We find the Christians growing in a personal apprehension of what Jesus is, and gradually finding more precise and more copious terms in which to express the absolute devotion which they had always felt towards His Person. The narrative of *Acts* presents us with a theology which is growing as naturally and inevitably as the rose buds from its own proper stem. And nothing could furnish us with a more convincing proof of the fidelity of this narrative than the combined simplicity and strength of the theology of the early chapters of the book. It is simple because it is based upon the facts which

\* *Acts* xxviii. 31.

† *Ibid.* ii. 38 ; v. 31.

‡ *Ibid.* xix. 5.

§ *Ibid.* ii. 38.

|| *Ibid.* xiii. 38 ; iv. 12.

¶ *Ibid.* v. 32 ; vi. 3 ; ii. 4 ; viii. 39.

every Jew acknowledges, while the Jew is not repelled by being told abruptly that Jesus is one with God. At the same time this theology is strong because it rivets the hearts of men to Jesus, as to Him on whom they must call for salvation.\* First the work of Jesus, and then His Person, is shown to be more than simply Messianic.

There is no attempt whatever to present a Messiah surrounded by a haze of speculation; no attempt to preach that Jesus was some angelic apparition, or that He was a great teacher who had been the first to see that self-sacrifice is the only means by which man can detach his life from what is temporal and evil, and so become a son of the eternal God. The starting-point is historical reality "even as ye yourselves know." The poetical yields throughout to the practical. The subject of St Peter's discourses is One whom "ye, by the hand of lawless men, did crucify and slay," and again it is the Jesus whom "ye slew, hanging Him on a tree." The events of Christ's life are mentioned as recent and notorious.† Any reader who is at all familiar with the way in which new deities have become popular in India, or the new cultus of a saint has spread among superstitious Christians, will at once be impressed with the sober and manly tone of this delineation.

Jesus was *anointed* by God.‡ These were plain tokens that *God was with Him*. He was a man approved of God by *mighty works, and wonders, and signs*. He is *the Holy One* and *the Righteous One*. He is the *Messiah* of God, the prophet like unto Moses; He is also the special *Servant* of the Lord foretold by the prophet, the *holy Servant*. He who thus fulfilled the different ideals and prophecies of the Old Testament is a more than human being. "He is the Stone which was set at nought of you, the builders, which was made the head of the corner."§ He is *Lord and Christ* (ii. 36).

---

\* *Acts* ii. 21.  
‡ *Ibid.* iv. 27.

† *Ibid.* iii. 13; x. 37.  
§ *Ibid.* iv. 11.

It is certain that He is Lord because He has been raised and exalted to the right hand of God. He is now enthroned in heaven, and the power of the disciples to witness to His work and dignity depends upon this fact.\* When we recollect what efforts have been made to depreciate the evidence for Christ's Ascension, even by critics who admit that the disciples in some way believed in the Resurrection, it is important to remember that in *Acts* the two great events are welded together. In preaching to the Jews it was especially necessary for the apostles to witness to the fact that the Holy One, whom the Jews had crucified and who was securely buried, had been raised from His sepulchre by God, and that the seal of divine approval had thus been given to His mission. This *Prince of Life* whom the Jews killed (iii. 15), and who was sent to *bless* (iii. 26), is proclaimed as the *Prince and Saviour* and Pardoner of sins (v. 31) by the double witness of the Resurrection and Ascension. In spite of the wise reserve with which titles are applied to Christ in these chapters, we find that nothing short of Divinity really embraces the various powers which are attributed to Christ. It is asserted that there is *salvation in none other* (iv. 12). His Name or Person is directly stated to have just restored a lame man to soundness in answer to *faith in His name* (iii. 16). It is indeed most remarkable that in the *Acts* miracles are regarded as the work of Christ Himself.† This corresponds with the fact that He is believed to be actually preparing for the full realisation of His Kingdom as "Lord," a title which He shares with the Father. It is Christ who has poured out ‡ the Spirit to fit the disciples for this "Day of the Lord." Such statements, and the prayer directed towards Christ by the dying Stephen, quite prepare us for the assertion of Saul, that Jesus is the *Son of God* (ix. 20), and the

---

\* *Acts* i. 8; ii. 33.‡ *Ibid* ii. 33.† *Ibid.* iii. 6; iv. 30; ix. 17, 34.

assertions made by Peter that He is *Lord of all* and *the Judge of quick and dead* (x. 36, 42).

With regard to the Resurrection itself, we may fairly say that it is much more difficult for us not to believe it than to believe it. Modern scepticism has shivered its own arguments when they have been brought into contact with the sepulchre of Jesus. For the evidence for the Resurrection is very complex and very tough. It underlies the history of the early Church and issues out of it, so that the whole of the New Testament, and the very existence of the Church, must be reckoned as evidence. The solitary fact that the early Christians were wont to regularly observe the day of the Resurrection as "the Lord's Day"—an observance which exposed them to detection and danger—is more eloquent than the longest array of terms and criticisms. I believe that few serious writers would now maintain that the disciples were guilty of a conscious fraud in declaring that Christ was risen. All that we know of their deeds and words consistently displays a sincere conviction. To be scourged and imprisoned, beheaded and crucified, is more than men are willing to undergo in histrionic fervour for a dead teacher's reputation.

Granting that the disciples were sure that they had seen the risen Lord, what likelihood is there that they were mistaken? No fond fancy of hysterical women, nor any wraith of cloud upon the Galilean hills could have persuaded the apostles that the Lord was risen indeed.\* If the mistake had been made, it would soon have been dispelled by broad daylight, candid friends, and the melancholy tomb. And although we cannot ascertain with complete certainty the number of Christ's appearances after His death, it is certain that these appearances were not regarded as subjective and inward visions. We therefore cannot be content with that

---

\* The idea of the Messiah rising again did not form part of the ordinary Messianic expectation, and this renders the conviction of the disciples the more important.

explanation of these appearances which is given by those who first assure us that St Paul puts the manifestation of Christ to him at his conversion on a level with the appearances of Christ to the other apostles, and then go on to assert that St Paul describes this manifestation in the words: "It was the good pleasure of God to reveal His Son in me,"\* for St Paul is here describing the inward illumination which resulted from the outward appearance. In 1 *Cor.* xv. and ix. he briefly describes this outward vision in language which is unmistakable. Of course St Paul's opponents probably denied the reality of the vision, and called it a subjective impression. But the point of St Paul's argument is that they must admit him to be an apostle if they admit that he has seen an objective appearance of Christ.

The effort to explain the appearances of Christ as mere sensations and impressions has a motive behind it. A sensation is eminently personal, and cannot be accurately translated into words or become the subject of definite religious teaching. Consequently, to represent the vision of the risen Lord as merely subjective, is one of the methods which are intended to eliminate the Resurrection from Christianity when more simple methods fail. And it is astonishing that a grave and learned writer, who believes firmly in the authenticity of 1 *Corinthians*, should say that "the idea of the rising again of the body of Jesus appeared comparatively early, because it was this hope which animated wide circles of pious people for their own future."† For a loyal use of evidence shows us conclusively that it was because the disciples were sure that the body of Jesus was raised and exalted, that they began to be sure that the bodies of all believers would be quickened and perfect in a future state. And when the same writer says that "Paul knows nothing of an Ascension, nor is it mentioned

---

\* *Gal.* i. 15 ; *cf.* 2 *Cor.* iv. 6.

† Harnack, *Dogmengesch.* vol. i. p. 83 (vol. i. p. 86).

by Clement,"\* he seems to be indulging in a mere play upon words. For in *Philippians* and *Ephesians* Paul, without using the phrase, "Christ ascended into Heaven," regards the exaltation and enthronement of Christ as a matter of central importance.† And Clement, in the letter which he wrote to Corinth in A.D. 97, not only quotes the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, which entirely hinges upon the fact of the Ascension, but also calls Christ "the High Priest of all our offerings,"‡ a phrase which is pure nonsense if Christ is not ministering as High Priest within the heavenly sanctuary.

To believe that the Messiah would come was the mark of a Jew; to believe that He had come and had been crucified was the mark of a Christian. The death of Jesus made any adjustment between Judaism and Christianity impossible. A Christ who was no longer "Christ according to the flesh" could not be the national Messiah of the Hebrews. On the other hand, any doubt that the disciples had entertained as to the Messiahship of Jesus was now dispelled, and it became their bounden duty to realise that the story of His life formed a necessary part of the plan of salvation which God had been working out in Jewish history.§

They realised this duty, and claimed the voices of the ancient prophets as their own heirloom. Hence we find a double aspect in the system of the early Jewish Christians. They worship in the Temple or in the synagogue; they observe the old festivals; they make vows after the manner of religious Jews; and they circumcise their children. They have a council which recalls to our minds the Jewish Sanhedrim; they have presbyters or "seniors," named after

\* Harnack, *Dogmengesch.* vol. i. p. 194 (vol. i. p. 203).

† *Phil.* ii. 9; *Eph.* iv. 10.

‡ *Ad. Cor.* 36.

§ Peter's speeches in *Acts* ii. and iii. are most suggestive. To prove the Messiahship of Jesus he appeals to passages in the Old Testament, in which he sees the Resurrection and Ascension of the Messiah mentioned. He also declares that the *suffering* of the Messiah was foretold. To convince a Jew of this was all important.

the officials who represented the judicial and ecclesiastical authority of the synagogue. And although we must be cautious in accepting the stories which descend from Jewish Christians of the 2nd century, we may believe that these stories are not mere legends when they tell us that James, the half-brother, or possibly the cousin of our Lord, lived under a Nazarite vow.\* Like the Jewish high priest, he acted as president of his council.

But if the Christians of Jerusalem occupied a national Jewish standpoint, their Judaism did not penetrate to the heart of their convictions. They kept the Law strictly, but also kept rigidly the teaching of Christ.† They met in the synagogue, but they knew that they were bound together by another bond of union. They worshipped in the Temple, but they preferred the upper room where bread was broken. The fact that Semitic words like *Amen*, *Abba*, *Maran atha* passed at a very early date into usage among Gentile Christians shows us that the Jewish Christians used certain liturgical formulæ, and the doxologies and benedictions used by St Paul point in the same direction. A new worship had grown up with the belief in a new kingdom.

“Day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people.”‡ Their gladness was the outcome of a new and abiding gratitude to God. By revealing Himself to them in Christ, He had shown a love as high as the heavens from which Christ had come, and as deep as the nether world to which He had descended. This joyful confidence in God begat a cheerful *service* of man. The first Christians knew the nobility of living in service. It was then impossible for the enemies of the faith to declare that it was a system which enabled one class of society to amuse itself while it quieted the mob

---

\* Hegesippus in Eus., *H. E.* ii. 23.

† See *Acts* iii. 22,

‡ *Ibid.* ii. 46.



with opiates. There was no enchanted palace of wit and taste to be dissolved by the blast of a revolution. It is probable that the little Church made mistakes. Christ had declined to rectify the unequal conditions of a man's life.\* But His followers started a modified communism, selling what they had in order to make a common purse. It does not seem that this sale of property was compulsory, but the subsequent pauperism and dependence of the Church of Jerusalem does suggest that a general community of goods was effected, and found to be a failure.

If all men were true Christians a community of goods might be harmless. But we must also admit that if all men were true Christians, private property would also be harmless. And the fact that the first Christian society was communistic is of infinitely less importance than the fact that it was a community of working brothers, whose brotherhood was not enforced but spontaneous. Nor was it a community of brothers who worked for their own exclusive benefit. They joined their hands together, but they did not join them in order to form a ring of their own, but to embrace the world. Such men are labourers worthy of their hire.

A second mark of the Church is *sincerity*. The first Christians knew that God had done far more than communicate to them a number of valuable laws. He had unveiled the secret of His own Being, showing to them in Christ a Wisdom and a Truth, which consists in personal qualities, and He had created in them a disposition which could assimilate this Truth. They, like all lovers of truth, were humble, for they did not compare themselves with other men, but with the divine standard which they had seen and known. Such a humility is necessarily allied with courage. It must give its witness; a necessity of preaching the Gospel is laid upon it. It is a humility

---

\* *St Luke* xii. 14.



which belongs to the prophet who knows that he has a message, and that his message is greater than himself.

“We ought to obey God rather than man,” is the motto of this sincerity, and to “suffer shame” for the name of Jesus is its reward. The author of *Acts* paints with some very natural touches the opposition which Christian sincerity provoked. The Pharisees believed in the doctrine of the Resurrection, and knew that the Christians kept the Law scrupulously, but Saul’s persecution of the Christians shows their hostile attitude towards the disciples of a crucified Messiah. The author impartially records that Gamaliel was an exception, and advised toleration. The Sadducees strongly opposed the Christians. They were latitudinarian by profession, and strongly disliked a clear-cut declaration of “the whole counsel of God,” and they manifested all the tender mercies of professional latitudinarians. The author of *Acts*, so far from inventing an improbable fiction, has evidently been guided by good evidence.

The Christian recognition of the meaning of truth was accompanied by a stringent discipline. The punishment of Ananias and Sapphira vindicated the principle that falsehood passes into a sin against the Holy Spirit, and that the Church, which is the Spirit-bearing body, must overcome such evil by its own inherent power. Doubtless a strict discipline was often needed. The Church masters its material only by degrees. But the early Church deliberately endeavoured to gain that mastery. It did not preach that the chief blessing of heaven was its width of accommodation. It did not permit men to compound for sins. And it would be well if this principle were always remembered at a time when it is forgotten—that, if we rob the Gospel of its austerity, we rob it of its attraction. A Christianity which is only pretty has neither the strength nor beauty of the Bride of Christ.

The austerity of early Christian life was nerved by a sense of *expectation*. Christians looked forward to the

return and "Day" of Christ. Sometimes, indeed, they needed warning against undue excitement concerning this advent which they thought to be so near.\* Christ's own words about the time of His return have occasioned much difficulty to modern readers. He says definitely: "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished;"† and again He says: "Verily I say unto you, there be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom."‡ Some critics have urged that such texts positively prove that Christ expected the end of the world and His own bodily return within a lifetime. The criticism would be plausible enough if our Lord's discourses did not contain other statements which place the end of the world in a distant future.

He says that "of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son."§ He says that before the end shall come the Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world,|| and that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."¶ It is impossible that these passages, and others of similar import, could have been inserted by a clumsy forger who wished to eliminate the difficulties caused by the fact that the world was still unjudged when all the contemporaries of Jesus were dead.

How then are we to account for the complex manner in which Christ spoke concerning His advent?

A solution of the problem is made easier by certain words in *St John* xiv., which are sometimes regarded as quite incongruous with the teaching about "the last things" in the synoptic Gospels. *St John* records that the night before He died, our Lord promised, "I come unto you," the descent of the Holy Spirit being the means by which Christ's

\* 2 *Thess.* ii. 2.

† *Ibid.* xvi. 28.

‡ *St Matt.* xxiv. 14.

† *St Matt.* xxiv. 34.

§ *St Mark* xiii. 32.

¶ *St Luke* xxi. 24.

presence becomes a living force within the Christian's soul. With the Spirit Christ comes in power. He imparts Himself to the Christian in a real, though unseen, communion. His coming is gradual and continuous.

So also with regard to His judgment. It is continuous. A great judgment of the Jewish Church and nation took place in A.D. 70, when the Romans captured the holy city. And our Lord treats this judgment as typical of the judgment which He will pronounce on the Christian Church, and on the whole world. To His disciples, who were familiar with the descriptions of "the Day of the Lord," given in the Old Testament, this connection between the two judgments would appear so inevitable that they were likely to exaggerate it rather than ignore it. And so it is very probable that they interwove the thought of Christ coming in that crisis of history with the thought of His coming to completely vindicate Himself at the end of the world.

"We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge," was the daily aspiration of the early Christians. They looked for "the times of restoration of all things" \* when the joys of ages would unite in the joy of meeting Jesus. If they were mistaken in thinking that their earthly eyes would see His coming before they closed in death, we can at least learn from them that spirit which a great modern writer has thus expressed for us : † —

"Some day, you believe, within these five, or ten, or twenty years, for every one of us the judgment will be set, and the books opened. If that be true, far more than that must be true. Is there but one day of judgment? Why, for us, every day is a day of judgment—every day is a *Dies Irae*, and writes its irrevocable verdict in the flame of its West. Think you that judgment waits till the doors of the grave are opened? It waits at the doors of your houses—it waits at the corners of your streets ; we are in the midst of judgment—the insects that we crush are our judges—the moments we fret away are our judges—the elements that feed us judge as they minister—and the pleasures that deceive us judge as they indulge."

---

\* *Acts* iii. 21.

† Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, pp. 193, 194.

## CHAPTER III.

### ST PAUL AND THE LAW.

THE events connected with Stephen—events which form an introduction to the conversion of Paul—manifest a historical situation as original as it is important. He was apparently a Hellenistic Jew converted to Christianity, and appointed to minister to the temporal needs of Hellenistic Jewish converts. The Hellenistic Jews challenged him to a dispute, and then denounced him as a renegade. He was accused of blaspheming Moses and God by maintaining that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the Temple and put an end to the Law. Now, it is a remarkable proof of the honesty of the author of *Acts* that, while he says that these charges were made by “false witnesses,” the speech which he says was made by Stephen in his defence, does, at first sight, seem to justify the accusation which the witnesses made.

The speech is a review of the history of Israel. Stephen takes the story of Abraham, and proves that God was with him when he left his father's house. He takes the history of Joseph, and shows that God redeemed him, though his own brethren sold him. He turns to the case of Moses, and proves that God's secret was with him, though he had been doubly rejected by his fellows. And then, having declared that the mass of the Jewish people had always rejected the interventions of God, he shows from the Hebrew Scriptures themselves that spiritual worship is independent of any chosen place.

We must infer from this report that the author of *Acts*

means that the witnesses were false, because Stephen did not really blaspheme Moses, and therefore did not blaspheme God; but we must also infer that Stephen had plainly declared that Jesus would shortly put an end to the Temple and the Law, as his accusers said.

It has been suggested that these "liberal views of Stephen," were the result of the fact that he was a Hellenist. But the martyr's implacable exposition of Jewish history, and his vigorous apostrophe to the Sanhedrim, do not result from the fact that he spoke Greek, but from the fact that he knew the mind of Christ. He had only repeated, with illustrations too poignant to be ignored, Christ's parable of the wicked husbandmen. He helped Christianity to define itself, and to separate from the Jewish Church for the sake of the religious union of the entire world.

The impression which St Stephen's death produced upon Saul was evidently less favourable than it has been represented by some writers who wish to diminish the supernatural elements in Saul's conversion. The Saul whom we know as Paul, understood that Christianity meant the destruction of that system upon which he rested his hopes of salvation. He understood that it would lead souls to perdition. He flung himself with ardour into a scheme of persecution, obtained the fullest powers from the ecclesiastical authorities, and started to nip the heresy in its bud at Damascus, the capital of Syria. Transfixed by the sight of that Christ in whom Stephen had believed, humbled to the earth, he passed through a silent struggle of three days at Damascus, and gave himself to Christ. There is nothing in the New Testament which suggests to us that he had any inclination to believe in Christ before he met the vision, nor is there anything which suggests to us that the vision was only an impression due to such an inclination. "Am I not an apostle? Have I not *seen* Jesus Christ our Lord?"\*

---

\* 1 Cor. ix. 1.

## 54 HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

These are his words; and St Paul believed that he had received a direct appointment to the apostleship from the risen Christ \* whom he then saw.

Having seen Christ, he believed that man is justified by God in virtue of his personal attachment to Christ, and not in virtue of the Law. He began to believe in a Church broad enough to pass all barriers of race, and strict enough to guard all concentrated truth. St Paul's dogmatic system has all the intensity of Pharisaism without its narrowness, and it has this double merit because he knows that he must love Christ to live. This potent love for Christ deals a death-blow to that self-complacency which cankered Judaism, and, at the same time, it leads the apostle to enquire what was the precise value of the Jewish system. His train of thought runs thus:—

The Law is proved to be inadequate, because no man can ever be pronounced righteous by God as a reward for performing the works commanded in the Law. The Law is also proved to be inadequate by the mere fact that the Messiah died that we might be justified† by belief in Him. But the Law is of divine origin and authority. It must, therefore, in some way, be a preparation for the Gospel, which comes from the same God as the Law. The problem is to describe the relation of the two systems.

The *Epistle to the Galatians* forcibly expounds this relation. It has very generally been supposed that these Galatians were people of Galatia, in the popular and ethnological sense of the word, and that the Galatians were people of mixed blood, chiefly Celtic, dwelling in the

---

\* *Gal.* i. 1.

† Needless bitterness has been aroused by discussions as to whether St Paul uses the word justify in the sense of "make righteous," or "pronounce righteous." Evidence favours the latter meaning, but St Paul never represents God as pronouncing a man to be righteous until He has made him righteous. God only "justifieth the ungodly" when the ungodly has received the gift of faith from God, and has the germ of righteousness within him.

northern parts of Asia Minor, in and around Ancyra. It is more probable, however, that they were the inhabitants of that district which comprised Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. All these four towns belonged to the official province of Galatia, and were important centres of administration; the Greek language was spoken there, and they were on the great commercial route from the East to Ephesus, Smyrna, and Rome. It was not until the 4th century after Christ that Ancyra became really important, and it is difficult to understand why St Paul should have gone so much out of his way to visit such an unfrequented place as Celtic Galatia was in the early Imperial era.

The *Epistle to the Galatians* indicates a personal knowledge of the Galatian Churches, while the *Book of Acts* says nothing about any visit of St Paul to North Galatia. We therefore conclude that the *Epistle to the Galatians* is written to the Churches which were planted by St Paul on his first missionary journey, and of which we have an account in *Acts* xiii., xiv. To his first converts—men in a district where Jewish influence was strong, and to which emissaries from Jerusalem could easily be sent—the apostle vehemently writes to counteract a Judaising movement. He exposes the difference between the Law and the Gospel as follows (*Gal.* iii. 1 to iv. 31):—

The relapse into Judaism is like the result of some evil enchantment or witchery. The Law involves a curse while the Gospel brings a blessing. The Law does not make any man accepted as righteous with God, for it demands a literal and absolute fulfilment of its demands. Such a fulfilment is impossible. Now, to have before us a code of obligations which we cannot fulfil, and which we know to be divinely given, is to find ourselves under a curse, for the only satisfaction which the Law can give is the unattainable satisfaction of finding life and comfort in a minute obedience to all the Law's enactments. The Law therefore leads us inevitably to a curse. But we are relieved from this curse



by Christ, inasmuch as God's condemnation of sin passed upon Christ, and so passed away from us. We are therefore able to receive the blessing pronounced upon Abraham, if we, whether Jews or Gentiles, adhere to Christ (iii. 1-14).

Again, the Law is transient and preparatory, while the Gospel is final and permanent. There is no inconsistency involved in the fact that one God both made a legal covenant through Moses and gave a free promise to Abraham. We may find an earthly analogy to God's covenant in a signed settlement or agreement. When an agreement is once made, we may not add new clauses which impose new conditions. And in like manner the Law was not intended by God to limit the blessings of His previously-given promise. What, then, was the function of the Law? It was given to provoke transgression. It is like a medicine which develops a malady and so causes the patient to obtain relief. It is like a gaoler who confines us until we are set free. It is like a Roman pedagogue entrusted with the moral supervision of children who soon outgrow his influence. Now, we Christians are no longer under such guardianship. We are descendants of believing Abraham and adult sons of God (iii. 15-29).

The Law is in fact a slavery, while the Gospel is freedom. St Paul here draws an analogy from the condition of a minor who has not taken possession of his property. Jews under the Law of Moses, and Gentiles under the law of conscience, are like minors under guardians. They are incapable of realising their own natural power. They are like slaves who can do no act which the State recognises as valid. And, nevertheless, they are heirs to a great property. Now, we Christians are heirs who have ceased to be minors. We are not under an elementary system, of which the most conspicuous features are external. We are sons of freedom, supernaturally born, members of the Messianic city—a city which is no longer desolate, but is the mother of the many



children who, to the exclusion of all others, inherit the promises of God (iv. 1-31).

Thus St Paul closes his appeal to antiquity. He has shown that history—the history of God's dealings with the world—is on his side. The promise given to us in Abraham, and the position given to us in Christ, represent the eternal purpose of God for man. The Law is not a repudiation of this purpose. It is a transitory means towards its fulfilment.

When we consider this conception of the Law, two questions immediately arise:—(1) Is it a conception which the Old Testament sanctions? (2) Is it a conception which the permanent experience of humanity verifies?

The difficulty with regard to (1) is obvious. St Paul seems to regard the Law as essentially irritating and provocative, while the saints who lived under the Law regarded it as consoling and sanctifying. The Old Testament is full of penitence, and hope, and trust. To the author of *Psalms* cxix., the Law of God's mouth is "dearer than thousands of gold and silver." The *Book of Deuteronomy* commands no fulfilment of a business contract with God, but says: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart." And the Christ, whom St Paul describes as "the end of the Law," set His seal upon this great commandment. It might, therefore, seem either that St Paul's respect for the Old Testament is a pretence, or that his opposition to the Law is only a controversial feint.

The latter alternative was maintained by Baur, who appealed to the fact that St Paul occasionally speaks of a final judgment according to our works and not according to our faith.

Baur's explanation is extremely superficial. It is not in the least true that St Paul relapses into Judaism as soon as he is exhausted by a polemical effort. The view which he takes of the Law is as consistent as the view which is taken by Christ. In the *Gospel of St Luke*, the most

Pauline of all the Gospels, Christ is reported to have declared that "it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the Law to fail." \* Christ regards the teaching of "the Law and the prophets" as fulfilled by the man who loves God and loves his fellow-man. In the same way, St Paul asserts that he is "establishing the Law." † He does not establish the Law as corrupted by the mental digestion of a Pharisee. Nor does he establish it exclusively as a system of precepts. He sees a Law within the Law. He uses the word "Law" of the Old Testament revelation generally; he includes in it the *Book of Isaiah*; ‡ and he asserts that he supports the Law as it was to Moses and the prophets. And the Law supports him in return. For it is the Law which furnishes him with the story of Abraham, and it is from a prophet who lived under the Law that he draws his text: "The just shall live by Faith."

Then (2), we have to consider whether St Paul's conception of the Law is verified by experience. We must remember that he desires to show the inadequacy of all Law except the Law of Faith. The Law, as given by Moses, and revealed throughout the Old Testament, he calls in a pre-eminent sense, *the Law*; he also calls it "Law" when he is thinking of it more as a religious legal system than as a series of the enactments uttered by Moses. But the word "Law" is also used in a general sense of all religious and moral systems from which Christ is absent. And St Paul's verdict on Law in general, and the Law of Moses in particular, is a true verdict. Just so far as Law is regarded as merely Law does it hinder a personal communion of the soul with God. It will hinder this union in various ways. In the case of a man who is outside all churches and dogmas, a collection of abstract rules of conduct may minister to self-satisfaction and consequent moral failure. In the case of a Jew the

---

\* *St Luke* xvi. 17.

† *Rom.* iii. 31. See Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, p. 96.

‡ *1 Cor.* xiv. 21.

Law of Moses, and glosses upon that Law, may create a spirit of casuistry and evasion. Let this be an illustration. A prominent English Jew once asked me to open a letter that lay upon his table. It might contain some information of importance. It was a Jewish holy day, he explained, and the act of opening a letter was forbidden. But the exertion of studying its contents was not forbidden. So a restriction which was intended to fence the sacredness of a day had degenerated into a tacit permission to drive through restrictions. And whenever religious teaching is primarily regarded not as a revelation of God, but as regulations made by God, there will be some danger of a similar casuistry. It is a casuistry which is incompatible with the idea that God is a God of grace, and, therefore, even honest Pharisaism only sees God through a veil.

It does worse than that. One of the prophets of modern Judaism, although he severely criticises St Paul, has unconsciously defended him by saying that, "in orthodox Judaism the Law supplied the place of the Person of Christ in orthodox Christianity," and "was the almost living link between the human and the divine."\* Now, gratitude and adoration cannot be really felt towards a half-personified Law, whether it be the Law of the Pentateuch, or the Law recognised by Agnostic respectability. These Laws need not necessarily be a negation of the Gospel. They may even be a necessary movement in the development of faith. But they proclaim practices and do not proclaim a Person. They consequently exalt achievement more than character.

The *Epistle to the Romans* is destined by St Paul to prove

---

\* Montefiore, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1892, p. 413. The author has done well to lay stress upon the joy which devout Jews feel when they obey the Law, and he realises that the personal sense of sin in Judaism was inadequate (p. 513). But he does not realise that because Paul had a truer sense of sin and of the "separate relation of each individual soul to its God," he was "a correct critic of Judaism," and saw its gloominess.

that his Evangel is a Gospel of character. In the conclusion of the *Epistle to the Galatians* he has already insisted that they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh so far as it is the medium of unholy desires and sensual impulses. Sin is incompatible with a Faith that worketh through love.

He now develops this idea by writing about "the righteousness of God by faith," the righteousness which is not merely given by God, but is also inherent in God. Over against the righteousness, which man endeavours to accumulate by actions that may be superficial, there is a righteousness which implies a deep understanding between God and the soul. This righteousness is attained by Faith. It is more than probable that many of St Paul's opponents were urging that his doctrine encouraged a false familiarity with God and a low-toned life. In writing to the Corinthians he had already defended the validity of his apostleship by pointing, not only to the fact that he had seen the Lord, but also to the character of his converts, and to the hardship of his own sufferings. He at least could not be taunted with an antinomian life. But it might be urged that he was better than his own doctrines. For an enthusiast will sometimes hold his head in the clouds while he is unconsciously standing in very slippery mire.

The difficulty is felt in our own day. A suspicion exists that justifying Faith is an immoral substitute for justice towards man and fidelity towards God. To a great extent this opinion can be traced to the result of Luther's teaching. And it is all the more necessary to detach the doctrine of St Paul from Lutheranism, because able opponents of orthodox Christianity are sometimes in the habit of depicting Luther as a true representative of the spirit of St Paul.\* If

---

\* Renan, *St Paul*, p. 569; Harnack, *Dogmengesch.* vol. iii. p. 718. The primitive Church was totally opposed to anything like the Lutheran theory, and regarded the Christian as subject to a new law (1 *St John*, iii. 22; *St James*; *Barnabas*, ii.; 2 *Clem.* viii.; *Hermas*, 6 *Sim.* i., and the whole tone of Clement and Polycarp).

this were the case, orthodox Christians might well feel disquieted. The sharp distinction which Luther drew between civil and religious righteousness, his loose views on matrimony, concerning which the apostle spake such "excellent things," his licentious assurance that fornication and murder committed a thousand times a day will not pluck the believer from Christ, his gibes at the philosophy of Aristotle and the ethics of St James, combine to form a burlesque of Pauline theology. It is true that violent action is generally the result of reaction, and there was much in Luther's circumstances and training to produce such violence. It is also true that in his calmer moments he described some features of St Paul's doctrine with admirable force. But he never adequately perceived the connection between Christian faith and Christian righteousness, for the simple reason that he denied that it was necessary for justifying Faith to be united with love.

The Roman Catholic theologians and Calvin saw the absurdity of this theory, and protested that Luther's distinction between Faith without love, and Faith with love was entirely foreign to the question of our justification. Their protest saved an integral part of St Paul's doctrine, for what is Faith?

It is the serious and enthusiastic acceptance of Jesus as the Son of God. The primary fact in the mind of Christ is the knowledge of His unique position towards the Father and towards men. He regards Himself as essential to the life and revelation of God, and essential to the life and redemption of men, and no one can call himself a Christian who does not accept this central fact in the mind and teaching of Christ. Such an acceptance cannot be called genuine unless it involves a complete moral submission to Christ. And whenever St Paul assigns to Faith a crowning religious significance, he has before his mind this devotion of character to Christ. He uses the word in different shades of meaning, and he sometimes gives the name of Faith to an

act of assent to God's message, whether the assent be made by Abraham or by a Christian. But just as the assent of Abraham to the promises of God is the expression of a deliberate attitude towards God, so the assent of the Christian to the doctrines of the Gospel—an assent which St Paul calls the "obedience of faith"—is part of a confident and intimate relation with the Son of God. The convictions of the heart are here inseparable from the convictions of the reason. To believe in such a Saviour is necessarily to love Him, and to love Him is to grow like him in sanctity.

Therefore the Gospel of St Paul is a Gospel for a holy life. It creates character, for it supplies men with new motives and affections which spread throughout their being. The result is that morality is not endangered but secured by Faith. This is shown by St Paul in *Romans* vi.-viii.

He has just explained that with the Fall Sin entered into the world; that the Law aggravated Sin; and that Grace, the undeserved love of God manifested in Christ, does more than counteract the evil effects of the Law. He therefore feels bound to explain that this generosity of God is no excuse for moral license.

(a) The first reason which he alleges is that Sin is a contradiction of the mystical union which Baptism implies between Christ and the Christian. Every man who has faith in Christ is baptised into Christ. And the great crises of the history of the Saviour are then repeated in the believer. Christ died, and the believer enters the baptismal water to die unto Sin, and to put himself out of its reach. Christ was buried, and the believer, in order to ratify his death to Sin, remains for a moment submerged beneath the water. Christ was raised from the dead, and the believer stands upright again to begin a new and risen life. This sacramental action must be reproduced morally. Potentially the baptised man is a corpse, so far as the attractions of Sin are concerned, but he has to realise that he is thus happily disabled. He must actively respond



to those powers which are latent in him through his union with the Christ who dieth no more, and is able to bestow spiritual gifts. The believer who thus responds to the gift of God within him may be assured that Sin has no power over him. He will not have vainly left Law for Grace (vi. 1-14).

This noble doctrine of mystical union with Christ is sometimes clouded by modern commentators. They grant that the union is mystical, and then append explanations which imply that mystical is imaginary. Sometimes they have a lurking fear that if St Paul had taught baptismal regeneration he would have thereby taught that Baptism is an infallible specific against future sin. They therefore consider that St Paul regards Baptism as only a symbol, and that he is speaking in metaphor. But if we observe that St Paul only regards Baptism as a specific against future sin, when the Christian actively avails himself of its effects,\* the difficulty disappears. And we may also notice that, if he had regarded Baptism merely as a symbol affecting the body, like circumcision, a Jewish antagonist could have attacked him at once. The Jew could have said: "You teach that one external ceremony is valueless, and you are putting another external ceremony in the front of your religion." St Paul, believing as he did in the essential Divinity of Christ, had no difficulty in believing that Christ, by Baptism, and by other means, can supplement our natural powers. And to explain the Christian's identification with Christ as equivalent to nothing more than an enthusiastic following of Christ's example is more suitable to the system of Socinus than the system of St Paul. The Zwinglian theologian should logically find a Saviour in the Unitarian Christ.

The transition from life under Law to life under Grace

---

\* This is brought out with greater clearness in *Col.* iii. 1-5, but in *Rom.* vi. St Paul also assumes that sin is a possibility in those who have been "united with Christ by the likeness of His death."

having been further illustrated (1) as emancipation from the service of Sin, and transference to the service of righteousness, and (2) as the marriage of the true self, formerly wedded to a sinful life, to Christ, the apostle proceeds to his second proof that sanctification is secured by justification.

(b) The moral conflict of the soul, in struggling with temptation, is terminated by Christ only. The Law is impotent to stay the conflict. St Paul carefully explains that he is not disparaging the Law or representing it as Sin. It discharges functions which are incompatible with such an hypothesis. It teaches man what Sin is, and it rouses Sin into activity. The Law cannot be Sin if it only comes in contact with Sin to detect and to irritate it. The Law is holy, and Sin was allowed by God to take hints from the Law, and then run riot that man might see of what deeds Sin is capable (vii. 7-13).

The Law is not to be blamed. It was given by the Spirit of God. The principle which opposes the Law is Sin, and Sin causes my flesh, with its manifold desires, to be an obstacle in the way of holiness. Hence, there are two hostile camps within my being. On the one hand, Sin in some way possesses me, so that I sometimes do what I hate. On the other hand, my rational conscience and my will approve of what is good and rejoice in the Law. And the conscience or "inner man" is so thwarted by the Sin in my flesh that without some new aid I shall be lost. Who will deliver me from this body, which is an instrument of Sin, and is bringing me to death? Thank God, Christ has delivered me! Without His aid I should still be serving two masters: for with my conscience I should be serving the Law of God, with my body the Law of Sin (vii. 14-25).

Eager interest has always been excited by this description of conflict with temptation. Does it describe the experience of a regenerate or an unregenerate man? Whether the man described is regenerate or unregenerate, is the man St Paul



himself? The first of these questions seems to be decided by the fact that the speaker is "sold under Sin." The depressed tone of the whole passage would be impossible in any man who knew that he had died with Christ, and a warm approval of the Law is quite possible in an unregenerate man. On the other hand, the depressing experience here described comes in a measure to every Christian. Even the contrite soul which knows that it is no longer sold under Sin may have to pass through a keen sense of desolation. It may feel forsaken by God even when His presence is most desired. And to prevent a relapse, when under this sense of desertion, even the saint may have to buffet the body (1 *Cor.* ix. 27). This points to our answer to the question whether St Paul is here describing himself. He is describing himself. The description is too tragic, and too much in harmony with other suggestions in his Epistles to be the result of sympathy alone. The portrait may be of the nature of a composite photograph. It probably includes features of evil which were more developed in other men than in the future apostle. But it is St Paul who had struggled thus, and the statement that even when converted he buffeted his body, reminds us that he did not reckon himself out of danger. We should be thankful for his portrait. The despondent man who is torn with temptations may here learn that he is perhaps God's chosen vessel. The fervent and the successful may here learn that he may yet become a castaway.

(c) The apostle has already shown that his Gospel saves from Sin, for he has shown that it saves him—Paul—from sinning. But the Christian is not merely a rescued moral being; he is a triumphant moral being. The soul passes beyond the law of prohibitions into the life of development. The Christian is not merely out of the grip of Sin; he is flooded with the energies of the Holy Spirit. In perfect agreement with the teaching of Christ in *St John's Gospel*,

St Paul represents union with Christ as connected with the reign of the Holy Spirit. The results of this reign of the Spirit are:—(1) *Power to perform what the Law declares to be right.* Christ took human nature upon Him, and Sin was therefore able to approach Him. After His death, endured for our sins, Sin could make no legal claim against Him. And Sin can make no legal claim against the man united with Him. We are free to receive the influences of the Spirit. To gratify the flesh is a present death. But if we obey the Spirit our bodies are doomed to die, but our spirit lives and our body shall share in Christ's resurrection.\* (2) *Enjoyment of a son's confidence in his Father.* This implies a sure hope of our inheritance in glory. Christ has already entered into this inheritance. We shall share it if we share in His sufferings. All creation eagerly awaits this consummation when the Fall shall be reversed; and the spiritual first-fruits which we have received are a foretaste which makes us long for the complete fruition of our adoption and our salvation.† (3) *Help in weakness; certainty of God's love for us in Christ.* The Holy Ghost helps us, and especially in prayer. We are also helped by the knowledge that God has loved us from eternity. He does nothing in vain; through eternity and time He has developed His plan for our salvation. In all earthly trials we do more than conquer; nor can anything that is beyond the range of sense part us from the love of God that is manifested in the love which Christ has for us. ‡

The melody and triumph of this passage fitly close St Paul's argument for the holiness of the Gospel system. He has not set a system of new prohibitions against a system of old prohibitions. He has pointed to the Christian life as essentially positive, and not negative. The Law leads man by bit and bridle. It represses human nature, and human nature has too much life in it to be kept right by negations.

---

\* *Rom.* viii. 1-11.

† *Ibid.* viii. 12-25.

‡ *Ibid.* viii. 26-39.

The Law makes self-restraint the rule of conduct, and man rebels, for he knows that life must be intense and warm. But the Gospel erases prohibitions in favour of beatitudes. Instead of "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not commit adultery," it says, "Blessed are the peacemakers," "Blessed are the pure in heart." It infuses a force and health which makes sin more and more impossible. It fills each capacity and thought. It expels the passions which desecrate and decay for those passions which hallow and endure.

St Paul's description of the Law is an exposition of the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, in the light given by a dead and deathless Christ.

If the above account of the attitude of St Paul towards the Law is at all accurate, we shall not find it difficult to understand his relation with the twelve apostles. His relation with the Twelve has been more controverted in modern theology than any other fact of early Church history, and the whole of Christianity has been thrown into the whirlpool of this controversy.

In 1835 appeared the *Life of Jesus* by David Strauss. The author was not directly interested in the composition of the New Testament, but in the Person and history of Christ ; he reduced Jesus to a pious Rabbi, and chiselled away every supernatural element in the Gospels as so much petrified mythology. But this raised a hard question. If the New Testament was written by the contemporaries of Christ, how could such a criticism justify itself? Was the Christ of Strauss the Christ of the 1st century?

Ferdinand Christian Baur supplied an answer by transferring the matter to the field of criticism. In studying the *Epistles of St Paul* he found a fulcrum for overthrowing the conception of Christianity which, according to his own admission, had been dominant since the *Acts of the Apostles* had been written. This fulcrum was one decisive fact. It was the absolute opposition between St Paul and the Twelve. In the *Epistles to the Corinthians, Romans*, and

especially *Galatians*, this opposition was evident. Primitive Christianity was now unmasked. The primitive apostles were Jews. Jesus had comprised in Himself two elements : a moral teaching which could be made of universal application, and a Jewish formalism which could never become universal. Paul seized and developed the first principle. The Twelve clung tenaciously to the second. The Kingdom of God appeared to them the extension of the system of Moses, with a recognition of the Messiahship of Jesus. But Paul, as a Hellenistic Jew, saw a wider horizon. He was convinced that the Gentile world would not come to Christ by the way of circumcision, and he knew that the Gentiles would be more ready than the Jews to accept as their ideal a crucified Saviour. He therefore proclaimed salvation by faith in Jesus without the Law.

An open and incessant struggle followed between the adherents of Paul and the adherents of Jewish Christianity, and this struggle continued until the appearance of a common enemy, the Gnosticism of the 2nd century. The two parties in the Christian Church were then forced to draw closer to one another, and of the twenty-seven writings of the New Testament, all, except the *Apocalypse* and the *Epistles to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans*, were written or revised in order to construct such a history of the origin of Christianity as would obliterate the ugly feud that had divided the Gospel of peace. For instance, the *Gospel of St Mark* was deliberately composed to remove the contradictions which could still be traced under the ingenious restorations which had modified the first and the third Gospels. The *Gospel of St John* was written late in the 2nd century, when the old conflict in the Apostolic Church had been nearly forgotten ; the *Acts* was a reconciling book, which makes St Peter and St Paul speak with one another's tongues ; and the short Epistles of St Paul replaced the Pauline conception of salvation by faith with that of salvation by faith and love together, and so formed a transition

to the spurious *Gospel of St John*, in which believing, loving, and keeping God's commandments are confounded with each other.

It is important to observe that such a theory could hardly have arisen except in a country which had for three centuries been hypnotised by Luther. It assumes that St Paul's view of Faith is what Luther said it was—a Faith in which love was not a necessary ingredient, and a Faith which could trifle with the Commandments. This connection between Baur and Luther was not sufficiently recognised, and Baur's theory was enthusiastically welcomed by the academical world. The friction which had undoubtedly existed between St Peter and St Paul, the genuine learning of Baur and the apparent simplicity of his theory, were enough to secure a crowd of disciples for the new school of thought. The great attraction of Baur's view was the fact that it appeared to give a plain reason for everything. It was a key that was warranted to open every secret of two hidden centuries. So the teaching which had been expounded at Tübingen was interpreted at Leyden, and appeared in the palpitating Parisian of Renan and Réville; it influenced the scholarship of Davidson, and the deceptive lucidity of Jowett.\* It became part of the stock-in-trade of the amateur theologian.

Since Baur, the Rationalists—I use the word in its

\* See Abbott and Campbell, *Life and Letters of Benjamin Jowett*, vol. ii. p. 341. Jowett summed up his views as a critic in the following words:—"The points of critical theology which always strike me as unanswerable, and which, if they cannot be answered, will slowly but certainly make their way, are:—

"(1) The impossibility of showing either the date of the Gospels or the manner of their composition.

"(2) Their isolation.

"(3) The ignorance of the Christian Church of everything but what is contained in them. They are an unauthenticated fragment belonging to an age absolutely unknown, which is adduced as the witness of the most incredible things."

It is difficult to describe the ignorance which is implied in these words when they are judged in the light of modern Biblical criticism even of a strongly Rationalist type; e.g. Harnack's *Chronologie der Altchristlichen Literatur*. Jowett, nevertheless, estimated the fourth Gospel more favourably than Baur (*Op. cit.* vol. i. p. 166).

ordinary English sense—have disagreed so hopelessly, that if I were to give an account of their opinions, it might be thought that I was not describing a procession of serious theologians but a literary carnival. One writer regards the Person of Jesus as entirely fictitious; one says that He claimed to be the Messiah, another that He did not; one says that He proclaimed Himself as the supernatural Son of Man, another that He did not; one says that He used language about Himself roughly identical with that recorded in the fourth Gospel, another vehemently denies it. But there is one positive thing which they have really done. They have immensely strengthened the orthodox position. I will briefly illustrate the way in which they have done so.

The most extreme school, represented by Professor Steck of Bern, disputes the authenticity even of those Epistles which Baur defended. The result of the work of this school has been to vindicate the general truthfulness of *Acts*, and to support the view that St Paul and the Twelve were in fundamental agreement.

Weizsäcker, whose ability is recognised by both friends and foes, scorned *Acts* but defended *Philippians*, which Baur repudiated as being diluted with Jewish Christianity, and as implying a hierarchical ministry. The authenticity of *Philippians* is now almost universally admitted.

The work of Ritschl tended to prove that the Catholic Church, as it existed at the close of the 2nd century, was a prolongation of Paulinism, and not a deliberate combination of Jewish-Christian and Pauline elements.

Hilgenfeld agreed with Baur in rejecting *Colossians*. Unfortunately for his purpose, he based his attack on an alleged dependence of this letter upon *Ephesians*. This led to a searching criticism of *Colossians*, with the result that its genuineness is ceasing to be disputed. The “reconciling tendency” of the Epistle, which used to be considered a mark of the 2nd century, is now admitted to be an expression of St Paul’s own feelings. Jülicher and Harnack



both declare themselves in its favour. *Ephesians* is also being installed in its old position. The importance of this fact can hardly be exaggerated. Baur attacked its genuineness on the grounds that it contained a 2nd century Catholic doctrine of the Church, and that it mixed the doctrines of St Paul with the doctrines of the Twelve by making concessions to "justification by works." In short, the Rationalists are now only united in rejecting the *Epistles to Timothy* and *Titus*. Even here, genuine Pauline fragments are admitted to exist both by Harnack and Jülicher, and as neither they nor any one else has succeeded in distinguishing the genuine texts from the supposed interpolations, nor succeeded in proving that the Epistles contain allusions to the Marcionite heresy of the 2nd century, we may reasonably regard these letters as authentic. The Paul of Baur, the Paul who made havoc of Jewish-Christian synagogues, and knew nothing of "the material conception of the Catholic Church,"\* the Paul who fought against twelve Unitarian apostles is dead. May he rest in peace.

The four Evangelists of Baur are also dying. I believe that there is only one particular in which any important opinion of Baur, with regard to the Gospels, is in any form retained by the Rationalists of to-day. It is the opinion that the first Gospel is a Jewish-Christian document, which was afterwards enlarged. It is generally admitted that St Mark's Gospel betrays neither the artful ministry of reconciliation, which was detected in it by Baur, nor the Paulinism which was found there by his disciple, Volkmar, but that it is, what the oldest tradition affirms, a collection of St Peter's teaching by his own disciple.

The fourth Gospel, instead of having been written after the activity of the great Gnostic teachers, and at a time when the original antagonism between the Twelve and St Paul was shrouded in the past, is acknowledged to be older than

---

\* Baur, *Paul*, vol. ii. p. 177 (Eng. trans.).



the efforts of those Gnostics. Harnack does not admit that it was the actual work of the apostle whose name it bears. But he admits that its author was named John ; that it was written at Ephesus amid a circle of St John's disciples ; that its date is not later than 110, and may be as early as Catholic tradition requires. Now, unless it is a complete travesty of St John's teaching—and I believe that few men would now maintain such a notion—the fourth Gospel furnishes another convincing proof that the relation of St Paul with the Twelve was not antagonistic. For any man who studies with delicate apprehension the writings attributed to St John and to St Paul will find there a “marriage of true minds,” which would be impossible if St John and St Paul had been really engaged in a bitter quarrel. And the *Epistle to the Galatians*, although it records a difference between St Paul and St Peter, does not record what would be essential for Baur's purpose. For St Paul does not say that he rebuked St Peter for holding a false principle. He rebuked him for “dissembling,” for once weakly pretending that he did not agree with Paul as to Jewish customs when he really did agree, and had previously acted up to his convictions. It was because St Peter really agreed with St Paul that the latter was able to rebuke him. This is a fact which the school of Baur has ignored.

It would be a schoolboy's insult to say that Baur had not one merit because that merit was not another. He had the merit of consistency, an excellence which his successors conspicuously lack. If they wish to keep the Christ of Baur, they must keep the Paul of Baur. They must have both or neither. They are already returning to the true Paul ; they must be prepared to return to the true Christ.

## CHAPTER IV.

### ST JOHN AND THE CHURCH OF ASIA.

#### § 1. *The Theology of St John.*

IN the prologue to his Gospel St John states that Jesus is the Logos, the Word and Thought of God. The author intends to explain that Jesus has a divine life of the same nature as the life of God, that He is therefore the centre of history and nature, and must receive divine honours. The importance which this fact has for practical piety is illustrated in the *Apocalypse*. In this book the historian and prophet twice falls at the feet of the angel through whom he has received the revelation, and seeks to worship him. On both occasions he is reproved and directed to worship God. But in the course of the book there are frequent scenes in which the Lamb, who is also called the Word, receives the highest adoration. Consequently, the command to worship God does not exclude the worship of the Lamb. The worship of the Word is capable of being comprehended in the worship of God, and the worship of this Logos implies the worship of God. And such a worship appears to be expressly claimed by Jesus in *St John* v. 23. Even the Rationalist writers who attribute the Gospel and the *Apocalypse* to different authors, cannot fail to see that in both these books the Word is regarded as higher than the highest of all creatures, and that the worship

paid to Him is not represented as an emotional ebullition but as a deliberate duty.

For we must notice that the doctrine of the Logos is by no means confined to the opening verses of the Gospel, although the phrase itself is not used in the course of the narrative. It pervades the book with its peculiar glow, like the priming of warm colour which tells through the outward form of Murillo's paintings. It never degenerates into dull metaphysics, though we need not doubt that the origin of the term was metaphysical. It was common in Greek philosophy, especially among the Stoics, where it was combined with a Pantheism which confused God and nature. It was used by the Alexandrine Jew, Philo, in meanings which are tinged alternately with Jewish and Hellenic thought. For Philo is, to a great extent, the victim of the language which he writes, and he confuses the angelic personalities dear to a Semitic devotee with the impersonal abstractions described by the Greek philosophers. He is very fond of speaking about the Logos. He regards this Logos as the revealer of God, as the instrument of God; he even calls him a second God and High Priest. In spite of this, his Logos is only personal in virtue of Philo's poetical or devotional enthusiasm. We are therefore not surprised to find that Philo never identifies the Logos with the Messiah, or conceives that the Logos could be manifested in one unique human life. Therefore, although the author of the fourth Gospel was probably aware that any Greek philosopher or Alexandrine Jew would find something quite intelligible in his doctrine of the Logos, it is too much to say that this doctrine is derived only from Philo or the Greek schools.

The Jewish Targums or Paraphrases of the Old Testament show us a rabbinical doctrine which is somewhat nearer than that of Philo to the teaching of St John. These Targums probably were not written down until the 4th and 5th centuries, but they undoubtedly contain much more

ancient material.\* They repeatedly speak of the Memra, or Word of God, when they wish to describe God as made manifest in His action upon the world. Thus, both the Targum of Onkelos and the Targum of pseudo-Jonathan use the phrase in *Genesis* iii. 8, and the Targum of Onkelos in its paraphrase of *Deut.* xxxiii. 27, actually says: "By His Memra was the world created," a phrase almost identical with *St John* i. 10.† This personification of the Memra of God was no doubt stimulated by the wish to avoid the anthropomorphic conceptions of God which are frequently to be found in the Old Testament. The more God was known to be a Spirit, the more difficult it became to think of Him walking in a garden, or to describe Him, with the child-like insight of Zephaniah, as a nursing father who "will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing."‡

The same wish stimulated the Alexandrine Jews. But the fact that it finds expression in rabbinical literature increases the probability that the author of the fourth Gospel derived his doctrine mainly from that source. For it is most unlikely that the Jews would have introduced such a theory into their sacred books in or after the 2nd century of the Christian Era. It would have been playing into the hands of their Christian critics. And therefore, although the present form of the Targums may be late, we must assume that this doctrine existed among the Palestinian Jews in the 1st century. It is very significant that Judaism, like certain forms of Muhammadanism, has sometimes shrunk from the idea of the loneliness of God which it has generally championed, and has introduced some notion of plurality into the conceptions of His being. The doctrines of the Memra and of the divine Wisdom are the most impor-

---

\* It is difficult to think that Jerome would not have used the Targums freely if they had existed in the 4th century. The Targums contain additions which are as late as the 7th century and even later.

† See Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. ii. p. 659.

‡ *Zephaniah* iii. 17.

tant instances, but another suggestive instance is furnished by the doctrine that God converses with Himself in prayer—a doctrine found in rigidly Jewish theology.\*

The attempt to avoid anthropomorphism in religion brought both gain and loss. It made a low and earthly idea of God more difficult, but it also made God seem more far away than He had seemed to those who thought of the voice of God resounding in the earthly Paradise. St John's language keeps the gain and makes good the loss. To him God is indeed a Spirit, but God was made flesh, and was revealed to man in the sorrows and the triumph of a truly human life. The message of God to man is essentially divine. And here St John touches another line of thought. Christians were already familiar with the term, "Word of God." It meant the Gospel, and St Luke had spoken of "ministers of the Word."† Now, the good news of God and the gift of God to man is Jesus Christ. Emerson has accused Christianity of dwelling with "nauseous exaggeration" upon the Person of Christ. But the consolation of Christianity has always flowed from the fact that it assures each soul that this Christ has lived and died for it. So the Gospel which announces that the Kingdom of God is at hand is merged into the Gospel that to see Jesus is to see the Father. Jesus is the supreme message of God to man, the first and final Word of God.

The union of various profound ideas which underlies St John's doctrine of the Logos has led to the opinion that it results from a reflection too mature and developed for the apostolic age, and that it cannot be the outcome of an apostle's mind. Even Weizsäcker, who is too cautious to assign the Gospel to the late date which has been selected by more extreme Rationalists, says: "It is impossible to imagine any power of faith and philosophy so great as thus to obliterate the recollection of the real life, and to substitute

---

\* See Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, pp. 278, 432.

† St Luke i. 2.

for it this marvellous picture of a Divine Being.”\* This is as poor a criticism as the statement of Renan that after the publication of this Gospel “Jesus will henceforth possess nothing that is human.”† For both these statements ignore the pathetic representations which St John gives of a human Jesus, who sits tired beside the well and weeps at the grave of Lazarus. This Gospel has no appearance of a morbid reverie or a philosophical conjecture. It is the work of one who first knew by experience what Christ did and was, and then brooded for years, with loving contemplation, over the life of Christ, while he felt His being working in his own.

His interpretations do not obscure but explain the miraculous deeds and commanding words which are recorded in the first three Gospels; and it is absurd for critics, such as Weizsäcker, to suggest on one page that the Gospel is the work of a forger, and to say on another page that it is moulded by the recollection of a disciple “who, in thought, lost himself in the Master.”‡ For the writer claims to be the beloved disciple, John. He is either an impostor or an apostle. It is incredible that an impostor should be the herald of such grace and truth, or have absorbed so skilfully the recollection of a real apostle. And yet the general drift of modern Rationalism has been to accuse this writer of the mixture of limpid spirituality and clever roguery which Renan attributes to Christ. Verily, they have treated the disciple as they have treated the Master.

Nor is it reasonable to say that the Johannine doctrine of the Logos must be later than the Apostolic Age because it differs from all the known doctrines of that age. The *Epistle to the Hebrews*, which was probably written by a disciple of Paul, must have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, for it assumes throughout that

\* *Apostolic Age of the Church*, vol. ii. p. 211 (Eng. trans.).

† *L'Eglise Chrétienne*, p. 71.

‡ Weizsäcker, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 232 (Eng. trans.).

the Temple services still exist and exercise a dangerous fascination over Christian minds. Now, it does not employ the term Logos, but it unquestionably teaches that the Person of Jesus is unique and divine. One Rationalistic method of argument is to say that this doctrine in *Hebrews* is half-way between the doctrine of St Paul and that expounded in the writings attributed to St John, and, in order to push the fourth Gospel into the 2nd century, vain attempts are made to prove that *Hebrews* was written in the last quarter of the 1st century.

The argument is as ingenious as a house of cards. But just as the removal of one card will probably cause the collapse of that playful erection, so the downfall of this theory will be complete when it is seen that it contains one most fatal error. This error is the assumption that *Hebrews* contains a half-way doctrine. *St John's Gospel* attributes to the Logos a cosmic significance, for it speaks of the Logos as performing the truly divine work of creating, not as a created agent, but as One comprehended in the life of God. Now, this is precisely what is taught in *Hebrews* i. 2, 3, 10, and it is also taught in the later Epistles of Paul. Weizsäcker attempts to make light of the similarity between the doctrine of St John and that in *Hebrews*, and with regard to St Paul's doctrine of the Son of God, he says that it "led neither to the essential Divinity nor to the cosmic significance attributed to Him in the fourth Gospel." \*

This daring statement apparently assumes that St Paul wrote neither *Ephesians* nor *Colossians*, in both of which Christ is taught to be as truly divine as in the fourth Gospel. But Rationalists find an increasing difficulty in denying the authenticity of these Epistles, and especially of *Colossians*, in which the cosmic significance of Christ is stated in a peculiarly Johannine manner. And the same doctrine is im-

---

\* *Op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 227.



plied in the early Pauline Epistles, although it is not explained in all its bearings. For in 1 *Corinthians* viii. 6, the Son of God is described as the agent in the creation of the universe ; and that St Paul did not believe that the Son acted merely as some created angel may be safely inferred from the fact that he continually speaks of Christ as invested with divine attributes.

I therefore repeat that the doctrine of the Logos cannot be regarded as a proof that the fourth Gospel was not written by the apostle, and no plausibility can attach to the Rationalistic argument, unless an unreal distinction is made between the teaching of the earlier and the later Epistles of St Paul, or between all the Pauline Epistles and the *Epistle to the Hebrews* on the one hand, and St John's writings on the other hand.

It is sometimes asked whether there is any permanent value in this doctrine of St John. We must answer that there is. For the doctrine is not merely a cosmological speculation, nor is it true to maintain that it causes men to put moral activity in a lower place than logical and metaphysical knowledge. It rested on the writer's impression of Christ's unity with God, an impression gained from intercourse with Christ on earth. It implies that we must not for a moment disassociate our idea of Jesus Christ and our idea of God. But we disassociate them if we deny that in the manhood of Jesus there was present something which was necessary to the inner process of God's life. This is the Logos.

In expounding the nature of the Logos, St John makes an important assertion with regard to the relation between man and God the Father. "As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name."\* In teaching that it

---

\* *St John* i. 12. So the various features of the Christian character are based by St John on the character of God. The Christian is to cleave to the truth because God is truth ; be pure, because God is pure ; righteous, because God is righteous ; loving, because God is

is necessary to receive Christ if we are to become children of God the Father, St John is in close contact with the synoptic Gospels, and the Epistles of St Paul. For the writers of the New Testament show great reserve in asserting that all men are, by natural birth, children of God. Very few passages can be alleged as implying it, except St Paul's quotation from Aratus in *Acts* xvii. 28, and our Lord's parable of the prodigal son. They justify us in saying that God loves all men, as a good father loves his children, and that all men are sustained by a divine life which upholds both their physical and their moral powers. But they do not justify us in saying that all men are actual sons of God. They only have the possibility of becoming sons of God. Even the parable of the prodigal son cannot be used as definitely proving that Christ taught the actual divine sonship of all men, for we may suppose that the prodigal had been spiritually like his father before he departed into the far country. And only a spiritual likeness to God, through union with Jesus Christ, really makes man a son of God.

It is necessary to call attention to this fact, because great stress has recently been laid upon the idea of the Fatherhood of God, but in such a manner as to undermine the unique position which the Gospels ascribe to Jesus Christ.

In the New Testament the only men to whom the privileges of a child of God belong, are the men who acknowledge the unique divine Sonship of Jesus. And the New Testament is quite opposed to any theory which either teaches that a man has these privileges until he believes in Jesus, or teaches that every man can become a son of God in the same sense as Jesus is Son of God.

The following passages in *St John* are among these which have an important bearing upon this matter. God is called

---

love; and because God has life, and is light, the Christian has life, and walks in the light (1 *St John* v. 20; iii. 3; ii. 29; iv. 7; i. 5; *St John* vi. 57).

"the Father" in the verse which describes the kind of worship which God desires (iv. 23). This apparently means that God has a fatherly love for all men, whether Jews, Samaritans, or Gentiles. Elsewhere, as in chap. v. 20, "the Father" means the Father of Jesus Christ. In chap. xiv. 8, Philip says, "Lord, show us the Father." Christ replies, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." This reply shows that the Father is, in a special sense, the Father of Jesus Christ, but it does not rebuke the apparent thought of Philip that God has a wider fatherhood. We may compare chap. xx. 17, where Jesus says: "I ascend unto My Father and your Father." This definitely asserts that God is the Father of the faithful Christian. Christ asserts, with still greater clearness, that no filial relationship exists between God and the men who reject the Son of God. In chap. viii. 42, He says: "If God were your Father ye would love Me," and He adds, "Ye are of your father, the devil."

Connecting these verses with chap. i. 12, we arrive at our conclusion. It is that St John, though he describes the love of God with extraordinary pathos, does not represent the words God and Father as quite identical. So far as God's purpose for man is concerned, He is represented as Father; His love comprehends all mankind. But man is not His child until he receives Christ, except in the sense that he derives his existence from Him, partakes of His care, and can, if he will, become His child in a true and ethical fashion. It is therefore plain that the word "Father" has an esoteric meaning reserved for the worshippers of Jesus Christ. Only through Christ is man at home with God.

St John's doctrine of the Spirit or Paraclete (Advocate) forms a stepping-stone from his doctrine of God to his doctrine of salvation. The Spirit is granted by the Father at the intercession of Jesus; He is sent by Jesus as well as by the Father.\* He gives a progressive knowledge of the

---

\* *St John* xv. 26; xiv. 26.

truth.\* This new revelation of truth does not supersede the teaching of Jesus; it revives that teaching (xiv. 26) and is derived from the divine knowledge possessed by the Son (xvi. 15). A love of the faith once delivered and a desire for development may therefore accompany each other. Christianity is to be something more than a return to the condition of the disciples before Pentecost, something less than a shapeless collection of the popular devotions of varying ages.

But the supreme work of the Spirit is to effect a true advent of Jesus into the soul of His disciples (xiv. 18), and here we pass onward to the doctrine of salvation which is taught by St John.

Salvation, or the reception of "life eternal," consists in the experienced knowledge of God through the knowledge of Jesus and communion with Him. To receive Christ is to receive the complete revelation of the Father, to pass from darkness to light, and from death to life. Man's highest good is therefore the knowledge of God, and to confess the Divinity of Christ is a test of Christianity.† In this Gospel there is no discussion of the relation between righteousness by the Law and righteousness by faith. Righteousness is only mentioned when it is said that, after the Ascension has shown God's crowning approval of His Son, the Spirit will teach the righteousness of Jesus to be the true righteousness (xvi. 10). It is implied, rather than taught, that the Law was unable to save men. Adequate *truth* did not come with Moses; *life* was not given by Moses, for he did not give the Jews the true bread from Heaven. Even the Scriptures did not give eternal life; they only testified of Him who gives life (v. 39). The principal opponents of Jesus are massed together under the name of Jews, so that the word is generally associated with the idea of stubborn unbelief. On the other hand, genuine prerogatives were given to Judaism, for "salvation is of the Jews," and the Jews who believe in

---

\* *St John* xvi. 13.

† 1 *St John* iv. 15.

Christ are sheep "of this fold," in contrast to the Gentiles, who are to hear Christ in the future.

Righteousness by the Law is therefore assumed to be impossible; the Law is only useful as a preparation for the Gospel. But just as righteousness by the Law is not directly attacked, so righteousness by faith is not directly proclaimed. The believer is not told that "the just shall live by faith"; he is told that Jesus said: "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." The whole duty of man is summed up in communion with Christ. The man who abides in Christ has everything which religion can bestow, for Christ abides in him and Christ is God. He shares the secrets of his Lord, and keeps His commandments no longer as a servant but as a friend.

We have here reached the mysticism of St John, the consciousness of direct union with God in Christ. Its harmony with the mysticism of St Paul is very plain. In both St John and St Paul it implies a devotion and worship which cannot fitly be offered to a merely human Messiah or exalted messenger of God. The whole idea of "Christ in us" implies that Christ created man and creates anew.\* And both the apostles are quite out of touch with the pseudo-mysticism which depreciates outward means of grace on the supposition that Christ has not chosen to meet His people directly in these means of grace. The serious words in which St Paul speaks of baptism and the Lord's Supper have their counterpart in St John's words about the new birth and the bread of life. Indeed, the latter discourse seems to be recorded for the express purpose of explaining and defending the Lord's Supper.

---

\* That the Christian life implies a divine work and presence within man, is a doctrine upon which John and Paul are as closely agreed as the doctrine of the heavenly pre-existence of the Son. There are traces of the same doctrine in the Synoptists, as in *St Matt.* xvi. 17; xix. 26; *St Mark* xiii. 11; *St Luke* xi. 13, and the various accounts given of the Eucharist. *St James* i. 18, shows the same doctrine in a somewhat untheological writing.

And yet there is a difference between the mysticism of the two apostles. St Paul had only seen the risen Lord; St John had known his earthly life. We have no warrant for saying that St Paul knew little and cared little for the earthly life of Jesus. But we see that in his extant Epistles the Death and Resurrection of Christ absorb the writer's thoughts. He expresses his doctrine of the oneness of the spiritual man with the spiritual nature of the risen Christ in an elaborate theology. But St John combines his deep teaching with a story of strange simplicity. His Christ is no less divine and spiritual than the Christ of Paul, but His divine greatness is shown in kindly deeds and pregnant words. It is this fact which makes the *Gospel of St John* so passionately loved by simple Christian people, who sometimes understand it better than "the wise and prudent." And it encourages us to hope that after the death of a theology which says that it is of Paul, and is not, and the death of a theology which says that it is of Peter, and is not, this Gospel will be recognised as uniting the belief of all whom Jesus calls His friends.

## § 2. *The Paschal Controversy.*

It is universally admitted that St John laboured and died at Ephesus, and that the Church of Ephesus and its neighbourhood was organised and taught by this apostle. Even if the *Apocalypse* were a forgery, it would, nevertheless, afford us with a strong proof that the apostle was living in Ephesus near the end of the 1st century. For the *Apocalypse* could not have been written later than the beginning of the 2nd century, as is shown by the attitude which the writer assumes towards Judaism, and towards the power of Rome. And a forger writing at the beginning of the 2nd century, or earlier, would not have represented John as living at Ephesus if he had not really lived there.



But while no one disputes that the numerous traditions of Ephesus and its neighbourhood prove that St John had a strong influence upon the Church of that city, it is often urged that one of these Ephesine traditions is fatal to the authenticity of the Gospel which bears the name of *St John*. During the latter half of the 2nd century, the Christians of Ephesus, and of the province of Asia, differed from the Christians of other provinces as to the fit time for keeping the annual Paschal festival.\* This difference of opinion smouldered for some years, and about 191 there was an open quarrel on the subject between Victor, bishop of Rome, and Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus. Polycrates declared, no doubt correctly, that he and his Church had derived their custom from St John. Now, an influential school of modern Rationalists has asserted that, although the Ephesine manner of keeping the Paschal festival was derived from that apostle, it was, nevertheless, in flagrant contradiction with the story of the Passion, as told in the fourth Gospel. It is therefore said that the statements of Polycrates and his party are decisive proofs that St John was not the author of that Gospel, and that it is a forgery of the 2nd century. This argument has been employed by Baur in Germany, by Renan in France, and by Martineau in England. It has owed much of its popularity to the fact that it appears to completely undermine the authority of a document in which Christ makes the strongest assertions of His own Divinity, and it has done much to discredit these assertions.

The following are the grounds alleged by the Rationalists for their theory :—

(1) The synoptic Gospels contain the original apostolic tradition, and they agree in the statement that Jesus celebrated the ordinary Jewish Passover on the evening between the 14th and 15th of the month Nisan; they therefore represent the Crucifixion as taking place on the 15th, after

---

\* The word "Pascha" is a Greek form of the Aramaic word for the Passover used by the Jews in the time of Christ.



the Passover had been eaten. (2) The fourth Gospel places the Last Supper on the evening between the 13th and 14th of Nisan. It therefore represents the Crucifixion as taking place on the 14th, and denies that Christ ate the usual Jewish Passover. (3) The Churches of the province of Asia, which were founded by St John, kept their Passover on the 14th of Nisan, and declared that they derived the custom from St John. They consequently believed that Christ died on the 15th, and that he ate the usual Jewish Passover. (4) Therefore the fourth Gospel was not written by St John, but by a forger who wished to emphasise the break between Judaism and Christianity.

The problem before us is to discover whether the Churches founded by St John agreed with the fourth Gospel in believing that Christ was crucified on 14th Nisan, and that He did not eat the usual Jewish Passover. Before we begin to examine our evidence, we should notice that even the synoptic Gospels narrate several details which are inconsistent with the idea that the Last Supper was eaten on the evening between the 14th and 15th, and that they do not say that our Lord ate a lamb. Therefore, even the synoptic Gospels do not represent Him as eating the ordinary Jewish Passover.

We may now sketch the different events which happened during the 2nd century in connection with the Paschal controversy.

From a quotation which Eusebius (4th century) makes from Irenaeus, we learn that Polycarp, bishop of Ephesus, came to Rome in the time of Bishop Anicetus, A.D. 154, and declined to give up the manner of keeping the Passover which he had derived from St John. Both bishops remained on the most friendly terms in spite of their difference. It is evident from the context that the Roman Church celebrated the "Pascha," or Passover, on a Sunday, and that as Anicetus and Polycarp kept the festival on different days, they also differed with regard to the fast which pre-

ceded the festival. The context also shows that Polycarp kept the 14th of Nisan on whatever day of the week it might fall.

Eusebius gives us another piece of information, quoting from Melito, bishop of Sardis.\* Melito was a copious writer, and one of the most venerated persons in Asia Minor. He wrote two books on the Passover in consequence of a dispute which arose at Laodicea when Servilius Paulus was pro-consul of Asia, about 165. Melito's work caused Clement of Alexandria to write a book on the same subject. Melito himself observed the 14th as holy. Whether Clement wrote his book in opposition to Melito is hard to determine, though the language of Eusebius suggests it. But it is certain that Clement believed that Christ died on the 14th. He asserts it expressly, and says that Christ kept the Jewish Passover until the year in which He died, when He proclaimed Himself as the Paschal Lamb. A similar argument is used by St Hippolytus,† who says: "At the time in which Christ suffered He did not eat the legal Passover, for He was the Passover which had been preached beforehand." Clement and Hippolytus both believed that Jesus did not eat the Jewish Passover; both believed that He died on the 14th; and as members of the Churches of Alexandria and Rome respectively, both followed the "Dominical" and not the "Quartodeciman" usage, keeping the Paschal festival on a Sunday, and not on the 14th of Nisan.

Apollinaris of Hierapolis was a contemporary of Melito. Two fragments attributed to him deal with the Paschal controversy. The writer speaks of persons who, "owing to ignorance," say that the Lord, on the 14th day, "ate the sheep with the disciples," and suffered "on the great day of unleavened bread." These people appealed to St

---

\* Eus., *H. E.* iv. 26.

† The statements of Clement, Hippolytus, and Apollinaris are quoted in the *Paschal Chronicle* (Migne, P. G., t. xcii. pp. 80-81). See, too, Routh, *Reliquiae Sacrae*, vol. i. pp. 160-169 (*edit. alt.*).

Matthew as supporting their opinion. In the other passage he glorifies the 14th day at some length, and calls it "the genuine Passover of the Lord." The stress which is laid upon the 14th day, makes it practically certain that the author was a Quartodeciman.

Most probably we shall never know the exact nature of the controversy at Laodicea. But as Melito and Apollinaris both seem to have been Quartodecimans, and as Clement himself, though not observing the 14th as the Paschal festival, fully believed that Christ died upon that day, we may doubt whether the controversy was concerned with the observance of the 14th day. The language of the writers whom I have quoted suggests that the controversy was connected with the practice of eating a lamb at this sacred season. The modern Jews do not eat a Paschal lamb, nor have the Jews done so since the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70. But the Greek and Armenian Christians still eat a lamb or sheep on Easter Day, and the custom is kept in some parts of England. Whether the first Christians adopted such a custom from the Jews before A.D. 70 we are unable to say. But Epiphanius,\* writing at the close of the 4th century, shows us that the Catholics of his day selected a sheep on the 10th day of the month and killed it on the 14th. The Quartodecimans of his time also killed a sheep.† We are therefore justified in thinking that, in the 2nd century, such a practice existed, and that some Laodiceans not only piqued themselves upon eating a lamb on the 14th day, but also defended themselves by saying that Christ ate the Passover on the 14th. Perhaps they combined their eating of the lamb with their celebration of the Eucharist.

Here, then, we have a party of Asiatic Christians who believed that Christ kept the Jewish Passover on the 14th, and died on the 15th. They acted in opposition to the

---

\* *Haer.* lxx. 12; l. 3.

† *Ibid.* l. 2.

fourth Gospel, though there is no evidence to show that they denied that it was by St John. And from the widely separated cities of Hierapolis, Alexandria, and Rome, we find one unanimous tradition—that Christ died on the 14th, as the fourth Gospel declares. Did the Laodiceans appeal from the fourth Gospel to any tradition derived from St John? By no means; they appealed to their own interpretation of St Matthew. And both in Asia, and out of Asia, that appeal was not allowed.

We can now deal with the great controversy which broke out about 191, between Victor of Rome and Polycrates of Ephesus—a controversy which was a mere continuation of the difference between Anicetus and Polycarp in 154.

At the invitation of Victor, synods of bishops were held in various parts of the Christian world to consider whether the Paschal festival ought to be kept on a Sunday as at Rome. The synods included meetings of the bishops of Palestine, of Pontus, of Gaul, and of Osrhoene. All these were in favour of observing the festival on a Sunday. Apparently they had never done anything else. The Palestinian bishops added that a letter had come from Alexandria, which showed that the same day was kept in that great city. But the bishops of the province of Asia refused to alter their day, and Polycrates wrote to Victor as follows :—

“ We observe the exact day ; neither adding nor taking away. For in Asia also great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the day of the Lord’s appearing, when He shall come with glory from heaven, and shall raise up all the saints. Among whom are Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who fell asleep at Hierapolis, and his two aged virgin daughters, and his other daughter who lived in the Holy Spirit, and rests at Ephesus ; and, moreover, John, who leaned upon the breast of the Lord, and who became a priest, wearing the priestly mitre,\* and a martyr and a teacher. He fell asleep at Ephesus. And Polycarp too at Smyrna, who was a bishop and martyr.”

---

\* That is the *petalon* of gold, such as was worn by the Jewish high priest (*Exod.* xxviii. 32 ; in the LXX.).

After mentioning the martyrs Thraseas and Sagaris, and also Papirius and Melito, the writer continues :—

“All these observed the 14th day of the Passover according to the Gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith. And I also, Polycrates, the least of you all, do according to the tradition of my kinsmen, some of whom I have closely followed. For seven of my kinsmen were bishops, and I am the eighth. And my kinsmen always observed the day when the people put away the leaven.” \*

Polycrates concludes by saying that he is not affrighted, and by hinting that he regards it as a duty to God to maintain the old custom. It is evident that he, like Polycarp, observed the 14th day as the Christian Passover.

The subsequent action of Victor, and the protest of St Irenaeus against his attempt to excommunicate the Quarto-decimans must be reserved for our chapter on *Rome and St Peter*. At present we must confine ourselves to asking how this letter of Polycrates can possibly have been regarded as adverse to the authenticity of the fourth Gospel, when it shows that the Asiatic Churches had, from the first, observed the very day which is mentioned by that Gospel as the day of Christ's death.

The explanation is so simple that it would appear almost childish if it were not for the important issues which are involved. It is that the modern critics have not known what the early Christians meant by “observing the Passover.” According to Dr Martineau, “the primary object of their commemoration” † was the Last Supper. As a matter of fact, their primary object was to commemorate the Death of Christ, the true Paschal Lamb, and with this commemoration they joined a remembrance of His Resurrection, by which the Church was delivered from a darkness, as of Egypt. In short, the early Christians, when they kept

---

\* Eus., *H. E.* v. 24.

† *Seat of Authority in Religion*, p. 230.

their Passover, kept the anniversary of an event which, according to the fourth Gospel, took place on 14th Nisan, and not the anniversary of an event which, according to the fourth Gospel, took place the evening before. If we can prove this point, the whole argument of Baur and his followers will not only be overthrown, but we shall also see that the Quartodecimans render a most valuable testimony to the authenticity of the Gospel. Fortunately, the evidence is so strong that the proof may be regarded as complete. All the lines converge to one point, and nothing but the most confident prejudice could ever have missed it.

(1) The dispute between the Asiatic Church and the Roman Church was, as every one acknowledges, a dispute as to whether the Christian Passover should be kept on the 14th day of the *month*, whatever day of the week it might be, or on the first day of the *week* at the same season. This fact alone is sufficient to show that the Rationalistic theory is wrong, for, if the dispute had been specially concerned with a commemoration of the Last Supper, the dispute would have been whether it should be commemorated on the 13th day of the month (according to *St John's Gospel*) or on the 14th day of the month (according to the general interpretation of the synoptic Gospels). Renan glides over this difficulty by quietly saying that the Roman Church had displaced the Passover by transferring it to a Sunday. But it would have been practically impossible to transfer it if it had been regarded as an anniversary of the Last Supper, for every one knew that the Last Supper was not celebrated on a Sunday; and the Roman Church, so far as we can tell, never kept the festival except on a Sunday, and kept it on that day in memory of the Resurrection.

(2) There is no evidence to show that the keeping of the Christian Passover was merely an annual commemoration of the Last Supper. No doubt the Eucharist was celebrated, but there would be nothing peculiar in this, for the



Eucharist was celebrated with great frequency. If it be true that the Laodiceans ate a lamb on the 14th day, it would still remain unproved that even they regarded a commemoration of the Last Supper as "the primary object of their commemoration." For, to commemorate a great incident in the Passover of Christ, even in the dramatic fashion which became usual in the mediæval Church, is not the same thing as believing that the significance of the Passover is exhausted by that commemoration. And if we set aside the case of these Laodiceans for that of the party which we know positively to have been Quartodeciman, we find that the Quartodecimans were never charged by their opponents with reducing the Passover to a commemoration of the Last Supper. The dispute affected the day of the festival, and the duration of the fast which came before the festival. This is shown by Irenæus, and is indirectly proved by the letter of Polycrates. It is also proved by the statement in the *Philosophoumena* that, whereas the Quartodecimans observe the 14th day, "in everything else they agree with all the things handed down to the Church by the apostles." \*

(3) There is abundant evidence to show that the Christian Passover was a commemoration of the Death and Resurrection of Christ. It is perpetually called a "feast" for the reason that the sufferings of Christ were not isolated from His victory. There is an apparent exception to this rule in Tertullian, when he speaks of the kiss of peace being omitted on "the day of the Passover, in which there is a common, and, as it were, public religious observance of a fast." † But there can be no reasonable doubt that this refers to the fast on Easter Eve, when Christians met together for a long vigil service and remained fasting until they received the Eucharist. This fast ended at different hours in different places. At Rome, in the 3rd

---

\* *Philos.* viii. 18, *cf.* *Epiph.*, *Haer.* l. 1.

† *De Orat.* 14.



century, the fast was prolonged until cockcrow on Easter morning.\*

The positive statements of the great writers of the 4th and 5th centuries agree with earlier writers in the evidence which they give as to the true nature of the Christian Passover which they celebrated.

The Circular addressed to the Churches by Constantine, after the Council of Nicaea in 325, says: "Our Saviour handed on to us one day on which our freedom was gained, that is, of His most holy Passion," and this is then described as "the most holy Feast of the Passover."† This Circular would by itself conclusively show the general belief of the Church in the early part of the 4th century with regard to the Passover, for it was drawn up after a consultation with the bishops, and they were apparently unanimous in holding that the Christian Passover commemorated the Death of Christ.

Now Eusebius, who was himself present at the Council of Nicaea, removes any difficulty which a modern writer might feel with regard to a festival being a commemoration of both the Death and the Resurrection of Christ, for he expressly interprets every Sunday as a commemoration of the Passover and of the Passion, which was further commemorated by fasting every Friday. He says: "We celebrate the same mysteries through the whole year, fasting every Friday, in memory of the saving Passion, by a fast which the apostles then first kept when the Bridegroom was taken from them, and every Lord's Day quickened by the sanctified body of the same saving Passover."‡ We may therefore regard it as certain that, in the 4th century, Catholic Christians who kept the Passover on a Sunday, meant to commemorate the Death of Christ together with His Resur-

\* St Dionysius of Alexandria, Routh, *Reliquiae Sacrae*, vol. iii. p. 224 (*edit. alt.*).

† Soc., *H.E.* i. 9.

‡ In Mai, *Nova Patrum Bibliotheca*, iv. § 12, p. 216.

rection. And it is certain that Eusebius, in writing the history of the controversy in the 2nd century, believed that the disputants had that intention. An unmistakable trace of this commemoration of the Death of Christ at the festival of the Resurrection is retained in the Easter Preface of the Roman Mass. "It is very meet, and right, and just, and salutary, to praise Thee, O Lord, at all times, and especially with greater glory on this night when Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us." There could be no clearer proof that the Paschal festival, in Rome as well as in the East, was regarded as a commemoration of the two great acts of redemption.\*

In the 4th and 5th centuries we know that some dissident communities also regarded the Passover as a commemoration of the Death of Christ. Epiphanius tells of some Quarto-decimans who determined to keep their Passover always on the same day, the 8th day before the Kalends of April, because the apocryphal Acts of Pilate said that "the Saviour suffered" on that day.† And the Sabbatians fasted on Saturday at the time of the Jewish Passover, and partook of the mysteries the next morning.‡ It is obvious that neither of these sects intended to keep a special commemoration of the Last Supper.

It may be urged that this positive evidence is somewhat late. On the other hand, it must be seen that it entirely fits with such evidence as we can gather from the 2nd and 3rd centuries. We have no reason to suppose that the Churches of Rome, Palestine, Alexandria, and Gaul fundamentally altered their conception of the Passover between the years 191 and 325. And no early writer says one word to make us suppose that the Quartodecimans of the 2nd century held

\* It should be remembered that there is an element of triumph in the New Testament conception of Christ's death (*Col.* ii. 15.; *St John* xvii. 5).

† *Haer.* l. 1.

‡ *Soz., H. E.* vii. 18; *Soc., H. E.* v. 21.

the opinion which modern Rationalists have attributed to them. The nearest approach to such an opinion was shown in the practice of the party at Laodicea, which apparently made the mistake which Origen corrects when he opposes the theory that we should celebrate the Passover "corporally" in the Jewish fashion because Christ had done so.\* Throughout every phase of the controversy, from the 2nd century to the 5th century, there is not one breath of suspicion against the authenticity of the fourth Gospel, and the one insignificant party whose conduct gives any support to the theory of Baur, Renan, and Martineau made no appeal to any real or pretended tradition derived from St John.

When we recollect that the Rationalistic argument has been employed with overweening confidence, and that the author of the fourth Gospel has been accused of committing deliberate trickery in order to promote his own dogmatic views, we may reasonably doubt if Rationalistic Theology is always as liberal as it proclaims itself to be.

### § 3. *The Rise of Montanism.*

About A.D. 157,† while Gratus was proconsul in Asia, there began, in Asia Minor, a remarkable movement, which was excited by a desire to revive the most rigid rules of early Christian life, and to prepare for an immediate return of Christ. The persecution which the Church then endured was favourable to the growth of religious excitement and fanatical morality when the Christians first heard of the new Phrygian prophet, Montanus.

Little of the oldest Montanist literature now remains. The Montanists carefully collected the oracular utterances

---

\* *In Matt.* xxvi. 17.

† Epiph., *Hæc.* xlviii. 1.—This date is earlier than that given by other writers, but it seems to agree best with the history of the movement.

of their seers, and some statements made by the prophetesses, Priscilla, Maximilla, and Quintilla, remain in the pages of Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, and Epiphanius. The last writer frequently quotes a *Prophecy of Montanus*.\* A Montanist, named Themison, is known to have written a general Epistle after the manner of some of the apostles.

Apollinaris of Hierapolis, Melito of Sardis, and Serapion of Antioch, all wrote against Montanism. Two writers who opposed Montanism late in the 2nd century were Apollonius, whose work was known to Jerome,† and a Catholic traveller who probably visited Ancyra in Galatia about 191, and wrote a book with which Eusebius was well acquainted.‡ This unknown author found Montanism rampant in Galatia, and it had already made some rapid conquests in the West. He opposed a Montanist named Asterius, whose works are also lost. The author of the *Philosophoumena*§ writes but little about the sect; and Tertullian, whose Quixotic chivalry led him to champion this irrational extreme, does not represent the earliest type of Montanism.

The original Montanism seems to have been fostered by some of the causes which exterminated Gnosticism. Orthodox tradition, a fixed baptismal creed, a list of inspired books, a line of apostolical bishops were being employed to crush the wayward independence of Gnostic thought. It remained to be considered whether private revelations had not a part to play in the life of the Church, and whether the prophet ought not to exist by the side of the presbyter. The Montanists replied in the affirmative, and were able to appeal to the example of the Judas and the Agabus of apostolic times. In those days the prophet had been a

---

\* *Haer.* xlviii. 4, 10, 11. † *De Vir. Inl.* 40. ‡ *H. E.* v. 16.

§ This work is ordinarily attributed to Hippolytus, but is assigned to an unknown author by Batiffol, *Anciennes Littératures Chrétiennes*. It forms one book with the *Elenchus*, or *Refutation of all Heresies*, although the title *Refutation* more accurately applies to the six latter of the ten books of the whole.

teacher guided by the Holy Spirit to speak to the glory of Christ in a manner intelligible to himself and others, and peculiarly adapted for the conversion of unbelievers. His utterance was not the result of study, but of a revelation from God. Belief in such prophecy was universal, and even after the first half of the 2nd century Christians still believed that some of their number possessed this peculiar gift (Justin, *Dial.* 82; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* ii. 32).

But while the Montanists endeavoured to establish a connection between the action of their prophets and that of the prophets of the Apostolic Age, and gained strength from some conservative elements in their teaching, a new principle was involved in their practice. If we desire to find a modern parallel, we shall find it in the prophecies of the Mormons, and not in that antiquarian revival of primitive offices which marks many Protestant sects. For it was not the intention of Montanus and his female associates to plant all over the world little Puritan churches which should be faithful copies of the organisation and discipline described in the New Testament. The Montanists claimed that their prophecy was a new prophecy.\* And it was not only believed to be new, but also believed to be something which was to be added to the revelation given to the first disciples. Their doctrine is summed up in the words of pseudo-Tertullian: "They say, indeed, that the Holy Spirit was in the apostles, but not the Paraclete, and that the Paraclete said more things in Montanus than Christ uttered in the Gospel—and not only more, but even better and greater."† And this statement brings before our minds the relation between Montanism and *St John's Gospel*, for it is in this Gospel that the Paraclete is promised.

---

\* Epiph., *Haer.* xlviii. 8. It was new not only in matter but also in form. The Catholics declared that prophecy in the Church was rational, while the Montanist prophecies were delivered in a state of frenzy (Eus., *H. E.* v. 16; cf. Tert., *De Anim.* 45).

† *De Praescr.* 52 (Tertullian's part of the treatise ends with chap. 45). The same is implied in Didymus, *De Trin.* iii. 41.

The Montanists appear to have made a part of this Gospel their starting-point, and to have used it in a manner similar to the use made of St Paul's Epistles by Marcion. This seems to be proved by the remaining fragments of their early history, and the explanations of it given by later writers such as Jerome.

Montanus, a mutilated priest of Cybele,\* became converted to Christianity, and began to teach at Ardabau, a village in Mysia. In teaching, he spoke of himself as "the Lord God Almighty," † and "the Father, and the Son, and the Paraclete"—that is, he believed himself to be the passive instrument of the Paraclete whom he possessed in the fullest conceivable manner.‡ He appears to have taught an extreme asceticism, to have forbidden marriage, and to have laid down regulations about fasting. He was joined by two wealthy women, Priscilla and Maximilla. Both prophesied in the same extravagant manner as their leader. Maximilla said that the Lord had sent her to share in His work as His interpreter.§ Priscilla believed that Christ Himself appeared to her in female form.|| Every effort was made to destroy the social and civil ties by which Christians were bound, and to create a new Christian commonwealth which should gather together the people of Christ into one flock, and prepare for the descent of the New Jerusalem from heaven.¶ The chosen spot for the new city of God was to be in Phrygia.

The Montanists began to revile the Catholics for not listening to their prophecies. Numerous synods were held by the Catholics at different intervals, and the heretics were excommunicated. Bishop Sotas of Anchialus wished to cast the devil out of Priscilla, but the Montanists prevented him, and organised their Church at Pepuza and Tymion. While giving the highest position to their prophets, they

\* Jerome, *Ep.* 41.

‡ *Ibid.* xlviii. 4, and Didymus, *loc. cit.*

|| *Ibid.* xlix. 1.

† Epiph., *Haer.* xlviii. 11.

§ *Ibid.* xlviii. 13.

¶ Eus., *H. E.* v. 16.

had some regular form of ministry. At a later date they were governed by patriarchs, stewards, and bishops, and among the earliest Montanists there was a steward named Theodotus. Montanus and Priscilla probably died between 170 and 175. Maximilla survived until 179. The claims which she made were as extravagant as those of Montanus; she declared that she was "the utterance, and spirit, and power" of God. Zoticus, bishop of Comane, and Julian, bishop of Apamea, endeavoured to confute her, but were in some way hindered by Themison, who, together with a certain Alexander and Alcibiades, now played an important part in the new sect. The new doctrines steadily spread, some Christian communities were seriously weakened, while the Church of Thyatira, to which St John had written, became practically extinct.\* The Montanists enthusiastically welcomed martyrdom at the hands of the pagans, and told the Catholics that this enthusiasm was a proof that Montanism was true.

The close connection between Gaul and Asia Minor brought Montanism to the valley of the Rhone. The heroic martyrs † who were imprisoned at Lyons in 177 interested themselves in the question, and wrote to the brethren in Asia and Phrygia, and to Eleutherus, bishop of Rome. Irenaeus, then a presbyter, was chosen to carry the letter to Eleutherus. In his writings, Irenaeus speaks of Montanism with reserve, and does not number it among the heresies which he describes. It is probable that his rare good sense enabled him to kill, by kindness, the Montanism which had invaded the city of which he became bishop.

In the meanwhile Montanism spread both in East and West in spite of the death of its last prophetess. It won adherents in Ancyra and in Rome, where it was introduced by a cele-

---

\* Epiph., *Haer.* li. 33.

† There is no proof whatever that the martyrs of Lyons were partly Montanist, or that the Alexander and Alcibiades, known in that city, were Montanists, as hinted by Renan (*Marc-Aurèle*, pp. 299-300; *See Eus.*, *H.E.* v. 1, 3).



brated ascetic\* named Proculus. He and his followers seem to have conformed to the faith and regulations of the Church more thoroughly than the Eastern members of the sect, and we learn from Tertullian that the bishop of Rome † acknowledged the prophecies of Montanus, Prisca (otherwise Priscilla), and Maximilla. He had already written letters in favour of the Montanists to the Churches of Asia, when an Asiatic named Praxeas induced him to change his mind and condemn Montanism. Unfortunately, Tertullian has not told us the bishop's name. Possibly it was Victor, but more probably it was Zephyrinus, who succeeded Victor in 198.

Tertullian and the self-styled "Spiritual" party left the Church, and Tertullian threw all his strength into a hopeless effort to prove that Montanism was both a restoration and a development of primitive Christianity.‡ In practice, the Montanists chiefly distinguished themselves from the Catholics by the rigour of their fasts, their abhorrence of second marriages, and their eagerness to suffer martyrdom. For a time they revelled in spiritualistic entertainments, and Tertullian tells us of the ecstasies of a sister who had held converse with the Lord, and had seen a human soul, which was coloured like air.§ In the West the religious effervescence soon subsided, but in the Highlands of Phrygia there lingered, even in the 5th century, this new Church of the Paraclete, with its grim discipline, its second sight, and its determination to be free.

Montanism is only a parody; but a parody always implies an original, and generally implies a well-known original. And the original behind Montanism is *St John* x. and xv. to xvii.

---

\* Tert., *Adv. Val.* 5.

† *Ibid.*, *Adv. Prax.* 1.

‡ *De Monog.* 4; *De Virg. Vel.* 1; *De Res.* 63.

§ *De Anim.* 9.

## CHAPTER V.

### CHURCH AND STATE.

#### § 1. *The Rise of Persecution.*

WE have already noticed the fact that in early Christian times foreign cults, in spite of occasional checks, were extremely popular in Rome and the Italian towns. This popularity was partly due to the action of the Government. It was impossible to find any satisfactory principle on which a particular form of worship might be permitted at Rome to non-citizens, and forbidden to citizens. The Government therefore adopted a policy of masterly inactivity, except in cases where the religion was violently dangerous to morality, or subversive of political order, and in cases where the religion would not meet the State on equal terms, but adopted an exclusive tone towards every other religion.

Judaism was an exclusive religion, and for many years it presented a difficult problem to Rome. The Jews were numerous throughout the Oriental provinces, and were found in Greece, and in the islands of the Aegean. These Jews of the Dispersion claimed semi-political rights, such as jurisdiction over their own members, and exemption from service in the army, and their religion was a standing criticism upon the worship of Greece and Rome. In spite of this they were granted many privileges. Considerations of policy led Julius Caesar and Antonius to grant them exemption from any duties incompatible with their faith. They were allowed to send the annual Temple tax to

Jerusalem, and were excused from breaking the Sabbath by appearing on that day in the law courts. Augustus ratified their privileges, and exempted them from participation in the worship of the emperor. Tiberius and Claudius confirmed the privileges of the Jews who lived in the provinces, although Tiberius did for a time put down Jewish worship at Rome, in consequence of the embezzlement of some money belonging to a Roman lady who had been converted to Judaism. But as a rule the religious and political unity of Judaism was recognised in such a way that a State was permitted within a State.

This led to some inevitable collisions. Judaea was made part of the Roman province of Syria in A.D. 6, and then the Jews were face to face with the procurators and tax-gatherers who represented the unity of the Empire. The death of our Lord and the death of St Stephen illustrate the condition of affairs. The Jews condemn Christ in their Sanhedrim, and then, with great ingenuity, bring a political charge against Him, and succeed in making Pilate inflict upon Him the Roman form of capital punishment. Stephen, on the other hand, a short time later, is accused of blasphemy, and suffers the Jewish punishment of his alleged offence, the Roman government being apparently too weak to interfere. From 41 to 44 the procurators of Judaea were replaced by Herod Agrippa, who naturally favoured the fanaticism of his compatriots, and therefore threw St Peter into prison, and had James, the son of Zebedee, beheaded.

After 44 the Church outside Jerusalem enjoyed comparative peace, so far as the Romans were concerned. For many years the Romans only regarded Christianity as a Jewish sect, and their hatred of the "barbarous superstition" of Judaism was so great that they probably looked upon any new division among the Jews with amusement and contempt. The narrative of *Acts* makes plain to us that the Roman officials had no intention of worrying either the Christians or themselves by coercive measures. The Gospel was first

preached to the Jews and first persecuted by the Jews. St Paul proclaimed it to the men of his own race before proclaiming it to the Gentiles at Salamis in Cyprus, at Antioch in Pisidia, at Iconium, at Philippi, at Thessalonica, at Beroea, and at Ephesus. The Jews were steadily hostile, and their hostility was doubtless increased by the fact that Christianity was making converts among them. At Antioch in Pisidia their violence was so great that St Paul announced his intention of turning to the Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas were driven out of Iconium by the Jews, who "stirred up the souls of the Gentiles, and made them evil affected against the brethren." \* These Jews, combined with the Jews of Antioch, followed the apostles to Lystra, and with the aid of "the multitudes" stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. The Jews did exactly the same at Thessalonica, where they persuaded "certain vile fellows of the rabble" † to assault the house of Jason, who had harboured the missionaries.

The narrative shows us, in the most natural and unaffected manner, that the Jews were hostile, the Gentiles indifferent until the Jews roused their feelings. The Roman authorities were not unfriendly. The matter was to them what a small riot between the Moslems and the Hindus is to the English officials at Delhi or Bombay. At Antioch in Pisidia, at Iconium, and at Lystra, they seem not to have interfered. Nor did they at first interfere at Philippi, the Roman colony in Macedonia, where St Paul quieted the maid who had a spirit of divination. Philippi is the first town where relations between Christianity and a Gentile populace became intolerable. The mob, as we should expect the mob to do, disliked St Paul's interference with a trade which had ministered to their morbid amusement, and sided with the men who were losing the means of their low livelihood. The *duoviri*, or municipal magistrates, were told that the

---

\* *Acts* xiv. 2.† *Ibid.* xvii. 5.

apostles were inciting the people to a violation of Roman law. The magistrates evidently did not regard their offence as very serious, for they imprisoned the missionaries for a night and released them the next morning.

More important is the famous disturbance that arose at Ephesus, but it is based on the same principle as the riot at Philippi. The worship of the Ephesian Artemis, the mother and the nurse of Nature, was very widely spread. It was customary for the worshippers to present to the goddess miniature temples of marble, terra-cotta, or silver. The guild of tradesmen occupied in making those silver shrines knew that their pockets would be affected by the revolutionary Monotheism of St Paul. Instigated by Demetrius, the warden of their guild, they threw the city into confusion and indignation. But they were too sagacious to make any complaint to the municipal or to the State officials. The Asiarchs, who were dignitaries appointed to regulate the worship of the emperor in the provinces, and were themselves wealthy provincials, showed a sympathetic interest in St Paul. The town clerk interposed to restore order, as he knew that the riot was illegal, and St Paul departed from Ephesus in peace. Both at Ephesus and Philippi the opposition was not religious nor political, but social and mercenary.

To sum up. The Jews steadily persecuted the Christians; when possible, they tried, as at Thessalonica, to bring about a collision between the Christians and the officials. When the accusation which they brought was merely religious, the Roman governors were tolerant. At Corinth, Junius Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, contemptuously refused to interfere. Antonius Felix and Porcius Festus, the procurators of Judaea, would also have dismissed the charges brought against St Paul if the apostle had not claimed, as a Roman citizen, to be tried before the emperor.

§ 2. *Nero and Domitian.*

The Epistles, both of St Paul and St Peter, show us the anxiety which was felt by the apostles lest the conduct of Christians should give the smallest occasion for scandal. But the effort to abstain from all appearance of evil may be maliciously interpreted as a mark of crime. In the case of Pomponia Graecina, who suffered in A.D. 57, it was her rigid life, her "melancholy habits," which actually raised suspicion and provoked punishment. Men who might not believe that a Christian was necessarily a debauchee, might, nevertheless, regard a Christian as guilty of *odium generis humani*. This convenient phrase was a recognised way of stating that an accused person was opposed to Roman religion and Roman civilisation. It especially included the crime of poisoners and magicians.\*

It was probably under this charge that St Paul suffered martyrdom in the reign of Nero, most likely in the year 67. In 64 Nero incurred the suspicion of having extended a great conflagration at Rome in order to rebuild the city with increased magnificence. The populace believed the Christians to be capable of any crime, and to disarm the prejudice felt against himself, Nero caused a charge of arson to be brought against the Christians. We learn from Tacitus† that certain persons were arrested, that they declared themselves to be Christians, and that their examination led to the arrest of a large number of their co-religionists. Nero desired to appease the anger of the city by ministering

---

\* The punishments of being burnt alive, crucified, and thrown to wild beasts, were the punishments inflicted on magicians. The crime of *maleficium*, i.e. injuring human life by magical arts, was frequently condemned by Roman law, and Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, viii. 19) justifies the punishment of magical arts on the ground that they are *generi humano perniciosæ*. It is quite probable that some Romans believed that the Christians were using magical arts to effect the destruction and conflagration of the world (Minuc. Felix, *Oct.* 11).

† *Ann.* xv. 44.

to its amusement. His gardens, now covered by the Vatican Palace, were turned into a theatre for inhuman atrocities. A "vast multitude" having been convicted, some were sewn up in skins and thrown to dogs, some were smeared with pitch and burnt to illuminate the public sports.

At the same time the charge of incendiarism broke down. A degree of pity was felt by the mob for the innocent sufferers, and the evidence of Tacitus, Pliny, and Suetonius combines to show that Nero was still popularly regarded as the author of the crime. The charge of incendiarism brought against the Christians was altered into the wider and safer accusation of *odium humani generis*. To save his own reputation Nero was obliged to treat the burning of Rome as a comparatively accidental expression of a general hostility to civilisation. He was thus able to incriminate men whose only crime was their religion. He assumed that their religion was a crime. This charge caused the persecution of the Christians to spread from Rome to the provinces, and it led to the second imprisonment of St Paul, and his death.

For I believe that Nero began, and that his successors continued, a definite policy against the Christians, and that it was in Nero's time that a definite form of legal procedure against Christianity commenced. The Greek name *Christian* must have been already known to the Roman populace, and it is quite possible that either from their own imagination, or from Jewish misrepresentation, the Romans had begun to associate Christian worship with human sacrifices, immoral indulgence, and malevolent spiritualism. If so, Nero was not the man to feel delicate scruples in taking advantage of the fact, and punishing the Christians on the simple ground that they were Christians.

This theory—that the Christians began, even at this early date, to suffer for their religion as such—has been both distorted and opposed. The theory of Prof. Mommsen is that they were proceeded against for high treason, involved



in a repudiation of the national gods, and that they were prosecuted, not in virtue of special laws, but in virtue of the *coercitio*, i.e. a power of summary intervention vested in the magistrates, which enabled them to deal with criminals without a fixed procedure, and without any fixed legal name for the alleged offence of the criminal. Against the main part of Mommsen's theory I have no objection, for he practically admits that the Christians punished for high treason were punished for professing the Christian Name.\* But I think that he minimises the extent of a cruel persecution, as I shall show later.

On the other hand, Mr Ramsay holds that the Christians were for some time tried under charges of definite and specific crimes, that a new principle was introduced into the State policy about A.D. 80, and that it was under the Flavian emperors (after A.D. 69) that Christianity itself became a legal offence, and persecution "for the Name" began.† Against this Mr Hardy maintains—and I think rightly maintains—that the treatment of the Christians early in the 2nd century was what it had already been in principle under Nero. And, indeed, Mr Ramsay's theory appears to me to be nearly as untenable as those German theories which put persecution for the Name as late as the time of Trajan, who became Emperor in 98. For the character of the Emperor Vespasian does not appear to have been such as to make him more inclined to originate a war against Christianity than Trajan. And besides this, there is much evidence against Mr Ramsay. The writer of the *First Epistle of St Peter* indicates that Christians are liable to be

---

\* Tacitus (*Ann.* xv. 44) says, concerning the Christians who suffered under Nero, *igitur primum correpti, qui fatebantur*. What did they confess? Obviously not the crime of incendiarism. For Tacitus believes that the charge was false, and that the populace ultimately regarded it as false. The populace would have changed its opinion if Christians had confessed the crime. The only alternative is to believe that they confessed that they were Christians. Nero took advantage of their confession and punished them for their religion.

† *Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 242 ff. (4th edit.).

punished for the Name.\* Now, Mr Ramsay has no more scruple than his German opponents in rejecting the *Second Epistle of St Peter*. But he does not reject the first Epistle, although his theory forces him either to deny its genuineness or to date it several years after Nero's persecution. He chooses the latter alternative, and therefore suggests that St Peter died about A.D. 80, in defiance of the old tradition that he died in the Neronian persecution. Nor can Mr Ramsay harmonise his theory with a statement of Sulpicius Severus,† which distinctly implies that after Nero's charge of incendiarism failed, Nero established a continuous legal procedure against Christianity, and not merely an inquiry into alleged crimes of which Christians were accused. That there were no *laws* against the Christians is a view which cannot be safely maintained in the teeth of the statement of Sulpicius Severus, and we have no right to discredit his words, as Mr Ramsay does, by saying that Sulpicius "is giving his own general impression."

Against Mr Ramsay both Prof. Mommsen and Mr Hardy urge that persecution for the Name—or what amounted to persecution for the Name—might have happened at any time since A.D. 64. The Christians might be liable to capital punishment either for *disobedience to the State*—involved in the refusal to worship the public gods, or for *legal atheism*—involved in the contempt of these gods, a charge from which they could not shield themselves by a profession of the Jewish religion. They might also be treated as guilty of high treason for refusing to worship the emperor. Now, as the persecution of the Christians was a standing persecution, and as they could be convicted of the definite

---

\* Ramsay, *Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 282 (4th edit.). "He recognises the fact that Christians now suffer as witnesses to the Name, and for the Name pure and simple; but he hardly realises all that was thereby implied."

† *Chron.* ii. 29. Ramsay, having shown that Sulpicius made careful use of the *Annals* of Tacitus, and probably, therefore, of the lost *Histories*, goes on to accuse him of a loose and inaccurate use of terms (*op. cit.* p. 255).

legal offence of treason, the probabilities are that the Christians were persecuted by a definite legal procedure. The opposition between Christianity and the State was complete. A religion which claimed to be both exclusive and universalist could not possibly be reconciled with Roman worship and Roman autocracy. Either the religion of Christ, or the gods of Rome, or the autocracy of the emperor had to be eliminated before peace could be made.

Both Prof. Mommsen and Mr Hardy have described some features of this opposition with much insight and great learning. But their words, nevertheless, appear to tone down the opposition and to halt before coming to a logical conclusion. Mommsen says: "There never has been a fanatic at the head of the Roman Empire. . . . It is true that Christianity ruined the base of the existing society; but thence it does not follow that the statesmen of the epoch made war on it *à la russe*. Enough of cruelty was enacted to justify the complaints uttered in the *Apocalypse*; but still the strong wishes of the enemies of Christianity were not appeased, and, on the whole, the system of ignoring and of leniency dominated."\* Verily, it is strange to hear so great an author describe as "complaints" the denunciations hurled by St John against the city that was drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And it is equally strange that he should argue that the Roman emperors were not fanatics, and therefore treated the Christians with a "general preponderance of toleration." Louis XIV. and George II. were not fanatics, but Louis savagely persecuted the Huguenots, and George put into force a complete legal system for crushing the Episcopalians of Scotland. And Mr Hardy shows something of the same tendency as Prof. Mommsen. He thinks that when "repressive measures" were taken against the Christians the method was irregular; they were due to "some mani-

---

\* *Expositor (Fourth Series)*, vol. viii. p. 5.

festation of hostile feeling on the part of the populace" and to the suspicions of provincial governors "acting in the special circumstances of particular cases."\* And while Prof. Mommsen correctly says that "Christianity ruined the base of the existing society," Mr Hardy is bold enough to maintain that, "practically, the Christians were not a danger to the State, and neither Nero nor Domitian could possibly have thought that they were, or have ordered systematic measures of repression on that ground."

In every case we must appeal to the harmonious evidence of the New Testament and of Roman writers. From the New Testament we learn that, when St Paul was tried, apparently in 63, he was released, and the preaching of Christianity was permitted.† From ancient Christian tradition we learn that he and St Peter perished in Nero's persecution. The *First Epistle of St Peter* shows us this persecution—a persecution "for the Name"—already beginning.‡ Tacitus gives us the lurid details which immediately preceded that persecution. Sulpicius Severus represents this persecution as connected with a definite legal procedure. Suetonius says: "The Christians—a class of men professing a new and mischievous (*maleficæ*) superstition—were crushed by punishments."§ The very context in which these words occur show that a systematic repression of the Christians was intended. For the phrase comes in the midst of a list of measures and regulations intended to be permanent for the securing of public order.

And the conclusion is that, after the charge of incendiarism broke down, Nero began persecution "for the Name," a persecution which continued steadily. The degrees of ferocity shown in this persecution varied according to special

\* *Christianity and the Roman Government*, p. 91.

† The authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles is not menaced if we reject Ramsay's theory as to the persecution. Ramsay has been guilty of "robbing Peter to pay Paul."

‡ 1 *St Peter* iv. 15.

§ *Suet. Ner.* 16.

circumstances. But there is nothing to show that it was relaxed. The actual method of procedure probably varied, as is suggested by Tertullian. He says: "We are summoned as guilty of sacrilege and treason (*majestas*)."<sup>\*</sup> The charge of *majestas* was an elastic charge, and it was not at all difficult to bring the Christians under that charge. Without much ingenuity any Christian might be shown to be guilty of dishonouring the gods, and therefore the dignity of the nation. He would then be punished under a charge of *majestas*. But if the culprit were less important, and his offence less definite, we may naturally suppose that he was dealt with summarily and hastily by virtue of the *coercitio* with which the higher magistrates were invested. For it was under this authority that ordinary offences against religion fell. In either case the offender was liable to be executed. And hence we find that although Tertullian says: "We are summoned as guilty of *majestas*," he also complains that Christians suffer in consequence of "the profession of a Name," and not an enquiry into an offence.<sup>†</sup>

The Neronian policy of punishing Christians "for the Name," both by the *coercitio*, and on the technical ground of *majestas*, was continued by his successors. Titus is said by Sulpicius Severus, <sup>‡</sup> in a passage which is almost certainly taken from a lost book of Tacitus, to have declared that it would be an advantage to destroy the Temple at Jerusalem, in order that the religion of the Jews and of the Christians might be more completely extirpated. Titus returned to Italy in 71, the year after the capture of Jerusalem, and became the associate of his father, Vespasian. It does not appear that any new repressive measures were taken against the Christians, and it is possible that they enjoyed a measure of tranquillity. According to Tertullian, the law against the Christians, which he calls "a Neronian institution," remained in force.<sup>§</sup> The shrewd and homely emperor

---

<sup>\*</sup> *Apol.* 10.

<sup>‡</sup> *Chron.* ii. 30.

<sup>†</sup> *Ibid.* 2.

<sup>§</sup> Tert., *Ad Nat.* i. 7.

Vespasian died in 79, and Titus died in 81. The sombre tyrant, Domitian, succeeded him and attacked Christianity with fresh vigour.

It is not difficult to see what motives probably actuated Domitian. He was both suspicious and suspected, and it was necessary for him to legalise and consolidate Caesarism in every possible manner. He was somewhat afraid of aristocrats, whether they were aristocrats by birth or by intelligence. Now, it cannot be reasonably doubted that Christianity had already made converts among the upper classes in Rome. By putting together the statements of Dio Cassius,\* Suetonius,† and Eusebius, the learned Church historian of the 4th century, we find that Domitian persecuted and killed a number of noble and illustrious persons. Flavius Clemens, a cousin of the emperor, was executed on the charge of "atheism," in 95. So says Dio Cassius, while Suetonius says that he was a man of "most contemptible sloth"; the statements of the two historians being quite compatible, and exactly illustrative of the Roman view of a religion which they thought equally godless and inconsistent with good order. The emperor apparently tried the case himself. The offence might have been dealt with by the *coercitio* of the city prefect—an official whose authority was at this time widening, and included some jurisdiction outside Rome. But the emperor's court was able both to exercise the summary power exercised by the prefect, and to deal with crimes such as *majestas*. The importance of the offender would suggest the adoption of the latter course, for Flavius Clemens occupied the highest rank in the Empire after the emperor himself.

Flavia Domitilla, the wife of Flavius Clemens, was exiled to the island of Pandateria.

Another Domitilla, a niece of Clemens, but by some writers confused with his wife, was exiled to the island of

---

\* Dio Cassius, lxvii. 14.

† Dom. 10-15.



Pontia.\* According to Suetonius,† another prominent Roman, named Acilius Glabrio, was also punished. He had been consul in 91, but was now accused of revolutionary designs. It is now generally admitted that these personages suffered as Christians. It is true that Dio Cassius speaks of them as “being perverted to the customs of the Jews,” but this statement cannot be taken as disproving the clear terms used by Eusebius or the historical facts which support our interpretation. These are: (1) that St Clement, bishop of Rome, writing to the Corinthians in A.D. 97, speaks of “the sudden and calamitous events” which had befallen his Church; (2) that Flavia Domitilla owned the ground in which she was buried, on the Ardeatine way, where a Christian catacomb was afterwards situated; (3) that Acilius Glabrio belonged to a family which was buried in a crypt, which became the centre of a group of catacombs beside the Via Salaria. That a martyr rested in that crypt is the most reasonable explanation of the formation of these catacombs.

Domitian not only took an interest in the maintenance of the old national worship, he was also much devoted to the idea of his own divinity. He insisted upon being addressed as “our Lord and God.”‡ The *Revelation* of St John is written in the midst of persecution, and its general tone corresponds with the information given to us by St Irenaeus,§ who says that it was written at the end of the reign of Domitian. Men have been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and Pergamum, in particular, is described as the place “where Satan dwelleth.” The words are remarkable. Pergamum was the first city in the province of Asia where a temple had been built to “Rome and Augustus.” It is probable that, when St John wrote, it was the only centre in

\* Jerome, *Ep.* 108.

† Suet., *Dom.* 10.

‡ Domitian was the first emperor who dared to assume officially the title *Deus*. Until the time of Aurelian the other emperors were satisfied with the title *Divus*. In the Greek language the distinction between the two words was ignored.

§ *Adv. Haer.* v. 30.



Asia Minor for the worship of the emperor, as Nicomedia was the only centre in Bithynia. Now it is plain that it was a refusal to worship the emperor which was the cause of the martyrdoms and imprisonments which had taken place. "The beast and his image" were the objects of an idolatrous worship, and this worship the martyrs had refused to pay. Times were changed since St Paul at Ephesus found himself on friendly terms with the priests of the Imperial cult. This very cult appears to have been used at the close of Domitian's reign as a test for discovering whether a person was a Christian or not. And as we know that the worship spread to one great Asiatic city after another, we can realise how often the Christians drew courage from the ardent pages of St John.

We must not suppose that even Domitian met with nothing but denunciation from Christian lips. St Clement has written down for us a prayer which contains these words:—

"To our rulers and governors on the earth—to them Thou, Lord, gavest the power of the kingdom by Thy glorious and ineffable might, to the end that we may know the glory and honour given to them by Thee, and be subject to them, in nought resisting Thy will; to them, Lord, give health, peace, concord, stability, that they may exercise the authority given to them without offence. For Thou, O heavenly Lord and King eternal, givest to the sons of men glory, and honour, and power over the things that are on the earth; do Thou, Lord, direct their counsel according to that which is good and well-pleasing in Thy sight, that devoutly in peace and meekness exercising the power given them by Thee, they may find Thee propitious."\*

The men who could pray thus for those who despitefully used them had not only the mind of Christ, but also that spirit of citizenship to which the apologists of the 2nd century gave expression.

### § 3. *The Rescripts of Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus.*

Nerva reigned from 96 to 98, and we do not know that he persecuted the Christians. He was naturally humane, and a medal exists which shows that he abolished, or

---

\* *Ad. Cor.* 61.

mitigated, the tax which Domitian had rigorously exacted from all real or supposed Jews. Both Hegesippus and Tertullian\* record that there was a cessation of persecution before the end of Domitian's reign, and Eusebius,† in quoting from these writers, adds the fact that, in the time of Nerva, St John returned from his exile to Ephesus. The apostle died after the accession of Trajan.

Trajan was emperor from 98 to 117. He promulgated no edict against the Christians, but his reign was marked by one of the most famous of martyrdoms. It is that of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, who was sent from Antioch to Rome that he might die in the amphitheatre, and, as he said, be "ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, and be made the pure bread of God."‡ The story of his journey to Rome illustrates the condition of the Christians at that time. Numbers of the faithful, both priests and laymen, pay their homage to him in the various towns through which he passes. No interference is made with their visits, and it therefore appears that while the legal position of the Christians was not ameliorated, they were often undisturbed. The situation is made clearer by the emperor's own words. We, fortunately, possess a rescript which Trajan addressed in 112 to Pliny, the imperial legate in Bithynia, with regard to the Christians. Pliny found that the Christians were very numerous in this province. Their religion had been spreading for some time, as Christianity had existed there during the lifetime of St Peter,§ and Pliny shows that some of the Christians had denied their faith as long as twenty-five years ago. Pliny ordered the execution of those who refused to deny their religion. When some declared that they were not Christians, he required them to worship Cæsar's image, and to curse Christ. Many who were accused of Christianity complied with these tests, but Pliny felt obliged to enquire whether the Christians were

---

\* *Apol.* 5.    † *H. E.* iii. 20.    ‡ *Ad Rom.* iv.    § *1 St Pet.* i. 1.

guilty of the evil practices with which they were charged. He learnt about their religious worship and their good morals, and, having failed to extort any incriminating facts from two deaconesses whom he tortured, he concluded that a lenient course ought to be adopted towards those who recanted. In writing to the emperor, he assumes that Christianity is dangerous, and a capital offence, and that Trajan will approve of the punishment which he has inflicted upon the contumacious adherents of the new religion.

Trajan did approve, and his rescript was, nevertheless, regarded by the Christian apologists as somewhat favourable to Christianity. He affirmed that Christians, if convicted, must be punished, but he mitigated the procedure against Christianity by making two concessions; (1) Christians were not to be hunted for by the police officials; (2) recantation was to be rewarded with a free pardon. Trajan also strongly condemned anonymous accusations, and by his silence as to charges of immorality, he tacitly acquitted the Christians of the more serious enormities of which they were said to be guilty.

Hadrian was emperor from 117 to 138. He took an interest in religious questions, and is said to have wished to build a temple to Christ. But we cannot say that his outward policy towards Christianity showed any new departure. About 124 he wrote a rescript to Minucius Fundanus, proconsul of Asia, with reference to the Christians. Mommsen has pronounced the suspicions against the genuineness of this rescript to be groundless. It neither expressly admits nor denies that "the Name" is a crime. Its object is stated as being "to prevent innocent persons from being harassed, and false accusers being allowed the opportunity of fraud." Definite proof is required to show that the accused "are acting against the law," and accusers who do not make good their case are to be punished as false accusers. As both the "atheism" of the Christian, and their refusal to worship the emperor,

could be brought under the head of a legal offence, there is no reason to suppose that Hadrian stopped persecution. He only made it necessary to persecute in a straightforward fashion, and much would probably depend upon the disposition of individual governors. But, inasmuch as Hadrian's policy did protect the Church from the popular outbursts which were among its greatest perils, the Christians took advantage of the fact, and began the composition of those "Apologies"—such as the still extant Apologies of Aristides and Justin Martyr—which were intended to show the educated pagan world that Christianity is an eminently reasonable and moral religion. The Christians, as a body, were unfavourable to the fanatical tendency which manifested itself in the Montanist heresy of the latter part of the 2nd century, and the Church showed its orthodoxy in a divine moderation and thoughtful patience.

It is indeed remarkable that, at a time when the chasm between the Church and the world was so wide and deep, Christian writers should have spoken as they did of Greek philosophers and poets, and regarded Socrates and Heraclitus as the friends of Christ. The early Church was by no means perfect, but it had at least caught some of the Christian spirit which rejoices in the good achieved by others, instead of exulting in their moral failure.

Under Antoninus Pius, who was emperor from 138 to 161, persecution still continued, as is testified by St Justin Martyr and Minucius Felix. The emperor addressed letters to several cities of Greece and Thrace, forbidding disorderly procedure against the Christians. But there was no real peace for the Church. In Rome itself the prefect of the city, Lollius Urbicus, probably in A.D. 152, executed Ptolemaeus and Lucius, the latter of whom offered himself voluntarily, while the former was a victim of private accusers. In open disobedience to the rescript of Hadrian and the letters of Antoninus, the citizens of Smyrna, apparently in superstitious consternation at some recent

earthquakes, made a tumult against the Christian bishop, Polycarp. His martyrdom in A.D. 155 is as memorable and magnificent as the martyrdom of St Ignatius of Antioch. His specific offence was the refusal to call Caesar "Lord," or to swear by his *Genius*, or "fortune."

#### § 4. *Marcus Aurelius and Commodus.*

Marcus Aurelius reigned from 161 to 180. In spite of his virtues and his philosophy, the condition of the Christians was more intolerable than before. Melito\* shows us that the provincial governors were prone to act with severity, and the pagan Celsus† shows us that Christians were sometimes deliberately pursued in order to be brought before the magistrates and condemned. As a rule, however, the policy of Trajan was continued, as is shown by the martyrdom of Justin and that of the Christians of Lyons.

Justin apparently died in 163. He was accused by a private enemy, a philosopher named Crescens.‡ The prefect, Junius Rusticus, told him to "submit to the gods and obey the emperors." This meant that apostasy would be rewarded by an acquittal. Justin explained his creed, and when asked if he was a Christian, replied in the affirmative. Similar replies were made by his companions. Sentence was then given to the effect that "those who have refused to sacrifice to the gods and obey the order of the emperor" should be scourged and executed.§

The case of the martyrs of Lyons, in 177, illustrates the ignorance of a provincial governor in a very interesting manner. On the occasion of the annual festival which had been instituted|| in A.D. 12 in honour of Rome and

\* Eus. *H. E.* iv. 26.

† Origen, *c. Celsum*, viii. 69.

‡ Tatian, *Adv. Graecos*, 19.

§ *Acta S. Justinii* in Otto, *Corpus Apologetarum*, t. iii. pp. 266-78.

|| Dio Cassius, liv. 32.

Augustus, the mob ill-treated a number of Christians. Some of the Christians were arrested, questioned by the municipal magistrates, and then sent to the legate. In violation of the rescript of Trajan, he ordered search to be made for other Christians. He then broke the law again by endeavouring to convict the Christians of other crimes than their religion. Certain slaves, who had been put to torture, accused their masters of the gross immorality with which the Christians were popularly credited. The legate next had to decide whether the defendants, who had apostatised, could be acquitted after they had been accused of such enormities. He submitted the matter to the emperor.

Marcus Aurelius simply reversed the legate's procedure. He replied that those who should declare themselves Christians should suffer capital punishment, while those who repudiated Christianity should be acquitted. To the surprise of the legate most of those who had already denied their faith took courage and confessed that they were Christians. They then died, as they refused to avail themselves of the pardon which the law granted to apostates. Some perished in the amphitheatre, while those who were Roman citizens were beheaded.\*

The foolish Commodus became emperor in 180. He offered a statue of himself, with a bow in his hand, to be worshipped by the Senate. He dressed himself as an Amazon, and removed even the name of Augustus from his month in the calendar. He was lenient towards the Christians, but a famous document of the end of the 2nd century—the *Acts of Apollonius*—shows that the law was able to run its course, and death was inflicted as the penalty for professing Christianity. Apollonius, a senator, was accused of being a Christian. The natural procedure would have been for a man of such rank to be tried by the

---

\* Eus., *H. E.* v. 1,

emperor, as had apparently been done in the case of Flavius Clemens. Commodus, however, in accordance with his usual slackness, left the unpleasant duty to Perennis, the praetorian prefect. In consideration of his rank, Apollonius was not thrown to wild beasts but beheaded. The details show: (1) that Apollonius died simply for being a Christian; and (2) that the worship of the emperor was employed as a test of his belief.\* Perennis acted courteously towards the accused, but was obliged to put in force the system which was defined by Trajan, but which, I believe, dates from the time of Nero.

Almost contemporary with the death of Apollonius is the death of the martyrs of Scili in Africa.† They also die "for the Name." Like Apollonius, they appear not to have been hunted out by the police. Like him, they die for refusing to pay divine honour to the emperor. The proconsul, Saturninus, urging the Christians to yield, says: "We swear by the Genius of our Lords." A Christian woman replies: "*We* give honour to Caesar as unto Caesar, but render fear and worship to Christ as Lord." The difference between their case and that of Apollonius is this: they die by virtue of the police authority belonging to the proconsul, while Apollonius, a more aristocratic victim, dies by virtue of the authority belonging to the Imperial court. All alike suffer capital punishment.

---

\* Eus., *H. E.* v. 21; Jerome, *De Vir. Ill.* 42; Conybeare, *Apology and Acts of Apollonius* (from the Armenian).

† Armitage Robinson, *Texts and Studies*, vol. i.



## CHAPTER VI.

### SUCCESSORS OF THE APOSTLES.

WHEN we study the New Testament, we find language which is like steel that cannot grow dull with use, and we find teaching which burns and moves like fire. We must not expect that the successors of the apostles should always be able to pierce and kindle in the same fashion. Those whose writings have been preserved for us have the same purpose as their predecessors, but not often the same power. And yet they are men who have learnt the meaning of religion, and planted in their very thought of religion is their thought of Christ. So their work is effective although it is not creative. They were able to show the pagan world what honour and modesty were inspired by the worship of Jesus, or to show that Judaism, without Christ, is but a broken torso.

One of the first of the early Christian writings which is not included in the New Testament is the *Epistle of Barnabas*. It is not so much an Epistle as an apologetic treatise against the Jews. It may be regarded as certain that its author was not the apostle Barnabas. Its allegorical method is extremely Alexandrine, and it appears to have been unknown outside Alexandria where it was freely used by Clement, its most ancient witness, and by Origen. The oldest Greek manuscript of this Epistle is in the famous *Codex Sinaiticus* (4th century), and the oldest Latin manuscript is of the 10th century. The Latin version does not

contain chaps. xviii.-xxi., but these chapters are apparently original, and are derived from the Jewish source which formed the basis of the first six chapters of the *Didache*. In chap. xvi. some critics think that they discover a reference to the rebuilding of Jerusalem by Hadrian in A.D. 130, but it is more usual to date the book about A.D. 98. In chap. iv. the author alludes to the approaching end of the world, and calculates that the prophecy of Daniel is about to be fulfilled, as there have been ten kings, then a little king who humiliates three kings. The ten kings are probably the emperors from Augustus to Titus, the three kings are the Flavian emperors, and the little king, Nerva.

Barnabas, with all the ancient Catholic writers, attaches a very high value to the Old Testament. They followed the example of St Paul, and the author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, in maintaining that God prepared for Christianity from before the foundation of the world. Christianity was therefore the one absolute religion, and the oldest religion.\* The Church is not an afterthought of God, but the oldest people of God as well as the newest people, and it could say that the Old Testament was its own property. Here these ancient writers entrenched themselves in a very strong position. But with regard to Judaism as a religious system, they sometimes utterly failed to take the robust and reasonable views presented in the New Testament. The Christians were no doubt puzzled at the remorseless cruelty of the Jews towards Christianity—a cruelty which prepared the way for the treatment which the Jews suffered at Christian hands in the later Middle Ages. We find therefore a tendency to regard the ceremonial law of Judaism as founded on some kind of error.

Barnabas represents this tendency, for he thinks that the Jews were seduced by an evil angel,† and that the covenant which was made between God and Israel, through

---

\* Barn. xiii. cf.; Hermas, 2 *Vis.* iv.

† Barn. ix.

Moses, was destroyed by the idolatry of the Jews, in worshipping the golden calf.\* The spiritual sense of the supposed ceremonial law is good, but the Jews have erroneously given a literal meaning to the laws about fasts and food, and the Sabbath and circumcision. Outward circumcision is nothing, for it is practised by Syrians, Arabs, and Egyptians.† The whole argument is stimulated by a fear of attributing to God any tangible manifestations of His will. And while we must admit that the explanations of Barnabas sometimes display great ingenuity, we must also confess our surprise that he did not perceive that the spiritualistic idea of God, which underlies his argument, is contradicted by his own belief in the Incarnation.‡

The *Epistle of Clement*, bishop of Rome, "to the Church of God which sojourneth in Corinth," is one of the most precious memorials of the early Church. Its authenticity is beyond question. It was known to Hegesippus§ and Irenaeus|| in the 2nd century, and also to Dionysius of Corinth, who wrote about A.D. 170. It was written later than the persecution in which Peter and Paul died with "an immense multitude of the elect," and after some serious recent persecution. It is conceivable that this letter is as early as the time of Nero, but it is more probable that it was written just after Domitian's persecution, and in the year 97. The oldest Greek manuscript of the Epistle is in the *Codex Alexandrinus* of the Bible (5th century). This does not contain the end of the Epistle, which has been found in the manuscript of the *Dilache*. There has recently been discovered a copy of a Latin translation which probably dates from the 2nd century.

The person of the writer has been a centre of keen

\* Barn. iv.

† *Ibid.* ix.

‡ Justin Martyr is nearly, but not quite as extreme, as Barnabas in his view of Judaism.

§ Eus., *H. E.* iv. 22.

|| *Op. cit.* v. 6.

interest both in ancient and in modern time. The consul of the year 95 was Titus Flavius Clemens. He was the emperor's first cousin, and his wife, Domitilla, was the emperor's niece. They were accused of atheism and Judaism. The husband was executed and the wife banished. Some have identified the bishop and the consul, but this is an improbable fancy. It is more likely that Clement, the bishop, was a freedman or client of the Flavian house, and of the family of Clemens. He spoke Greek, and the tone of the letter certainly suggests that he was, by birth, a Jew. Probably he learnt Christianity from the apostles themselves, and was raised in time to the position of head of the Roman Church. His relation with the Flavian family would easily give him the opportunity of introducing the faith into the inmost circle of the Roman aristocracy.

The occasion of the letter was a dissension at Corinth. Certain presbyters have been threatened with expulsion from their office by some quarrelsome laymen. Clement protests against any such action as a violation of all principles of lawful order, and as a violation of the principles of the apostles with regard to the ministry. On the lines of this double protest he begins by contrasting the state of the Corinthian Church before the schism with its present disorder, and exhorts his readers to repentance and humility, appealing to the Old Testament and the example of Christ. The peace and harmony of the universe are then described. There are prescribed limits for the sun and for the stars. The sea knows its proper bounds. The seasons and the winds fulfil their service in due turn. The very smallest of living beings meet together in peace and concord.

Then comes a long exhortation on the duties of the Christian life. They are to prepare for the Resurrection, of which every new morning and every bursting seed is a type. The fable which Herodotus had told about the

Phoenix which comes to life again after 500 years, when it is placed upon the altar of the sun, furnishes Clement with another illustration of the Resurrection. The doctrine of justification by faith is explained, partly with quotations from the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. Christ is described as the "High Priest of all our offerings." Clement uses Trinitarian formulae, and regards Christ as truly divine and living.\*

Reverence for order flows from His unique position. In the Roman army "all are not prefects nor commanders of a thousand, nor of a hundred, nor of fifty," and our own physical bodies show us that every member must unite if the body is to be preserved.

The unity of God's work in nature and the derivation of all grace from our Saviour having been asserted, Clement deals with the Christian ministry. The principle still holds good that "unto the high priest his peculiar services are assigned, and their own proper place is prescribed to the priests; upon the Levites their own proper ministrations devolve; the layman is bound by the laws that pertain to laymen." Among the Jewish priests, those who act contrary to the divine Will are punished with death. So far from Christians being freed from a strict regard to rule, they are liable to even greater severity on account of their greater knowledge.

Christ was sent by God; the apostles by Christ. When fully assured by the Resurrection of Christ, and by the Holy Ghost, they proclaimed God's Kingdom and appointed *episkopoi* and deacons. This was deliberately done to prevent future strife. The Corinthian factions, by thrusting their clergy out of their ministration, have been more guilty than the Corinthians rebuked by Paul. The long letter, full of sobriety and Scripture, ends with a praise of love, an earnest prayer, and a final exhortation.

---

\* *Ad Cor.* 22, 36, 46, 58.

Whatever his birth may have been, Clement represents what once was Roman, in the best sense of the word. He has an intense love of order and organisation, but his devotion to the Church is part of his devotion to Christ. He praises "moderation," but combines it with enthusiasm. His representation of the faith of Abraham seems to comprehend, without compromising, the different aspects of faith which are shown in the *Epistle of St James*, and in the *Epistles to the Romans* and the *Hebrews*.

The practical insight of Clement, his self-restraint and piety, made him a master of his time and kind. Next to the apostles he became the most important figure of the early Church. As in a modern university some famous teacher may, even before his death, become a fetish, in which is personified the idea of liberty and progress, so in Clement there was personified the idea of apostolical government and tradition. He became the centre of legend and apocrypha. Of the apocryphal *Homilies* and *Recognitions*, which were among the first means of altering the Rome of Clement into the Rome of Leo XIII., we shall speak later. The so-called *Second Epistle of Clement* is earlier, belonging to the 2nd century. Eusebius refers to it, but regards the author as uncertain.\* It shows no acquaintance with the Johannine literature, but the brevity of the Epistle will not allow us to lay much stress upon this fact. It is not really an Epistle, but a moral instruction or homily; it does not claim to be by Clement, nor does it resemble his style. Its tone is very similar to that of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and this fact both points to its date and suggests a Roman origin. Lightfoot, however, regarded it as Corinthian. We should note that it contains a reputed saying of our Lord, which was found in the apocryphal Gospel according to the Egyptians. It is a pity that a treatise which is not an Epistle, and not by St Clement, and does not pretend to be

---

\* *H. E.* iii. 38.

by St Clement, should be called by a title which suggests a forgery.

We possess three editions of the *Letters of St Ignatius*, who suffered martyrdom at Rome in the time of Trajan, probably in A.D. 110 :—

(a) Seven letters—to Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians, Smyrnaeans, Polycarp. A Greek manuscript of the 11th century preserves six of these letters ; the other letter, that to the Romans, has survived in another Greek manuscript. Robert Grosseteste, the famous bishop of Lincoln, who resisted papal power in the 13th century, wrote a Latin version of these letters.

(b) Thirteen letters—the seven letters, with interpolations, and letters from Mary of Cassobola to Ignatius, to Mary of Cassobola from Ignatius, to Philippians, Tarsians, Antiochians, Hero. This was the popular version of the Middle Ages.

(c) Three letters—to Ephesians, Romans, Polycarp. This is merely a Syriac abridgment of (a).

It has been proved beyond dispute that (b) is not a genuine collection, and that it was compiled about 375 by the ingenious heretic who drew up the *Apostolical Constitutions*. It is equally certain that (a) is completely genuine. It was known to Eusebius ;\* Clement of Alexandria quotes the letter to the Ephesians, Irenaeus and Origen that to the Romans. Additional evidence to the correspondence of Ignatius is given by the letter of Polycarp. The type of Gnosticism which is opposed in these letters affords an indirect, but most telling, proof in favour of the traditional Catholic view of early Christian literature. For it is evidently earlier and less developed than the heresy of the great Gnostics, who flourished rather before A.D. 150. And, nevertheless, the heresy which is opposed is more developed than that which is opposed in the Pastoral Epistles of St Paul.

---

\* *H. E.* iii. 36.



To dispute the authenticity of these letters was to stretch a principle of Rationalism until the principle snapped. The chief reason for doubting them was the fact that they imply a cohesion of the Churches which forms them into one "Catholic Church,"\* and regard Episcopacy as the symbol and guarantee of this cohesion. According to the most popular Rationalistic hypothesis, all the members of the primitive Church were equally inspired; then the presbyters assumed authority over their own local Church; then the president of the presbyters absorbed the powers of the presbyters, and consequently of the local Church; then these presidents, or bishops of different local Churches, co-operated with one another and thus created one Catholic Church, and constituted one supreme inspired order.

The supporters of this theory, which assumes that equality of inspiration excludes diversity of inspiration, could not tolerate the *Letters of Ignatius*. For these Epistles represent the last of these stages of ecclesiastical organisation, and they claim to be the work of a leading Christian who perished, probably at an advanced age, about A.D. 110. How could such a pronounced ecclesiasticism exist while men who remembered the apostles were still alive? Impossible. And so Renan, amid much agreeable literary perfumery, speaks blandly of "pseudo-Ignatius."† But what Rationalism creates, Rationalism can destroy, and Renan's "pseudo-Ignatius" is already in the land from which no traveller returns.‡

Ignatius was bishop of Antioch, the third city of the Roman Empire, a place which was all nature and all art. The quiet groves of Daphne, and the rippling Orontes were rivalled in beauty by the miles of marble colonnades, and the statues that adorned the roads. Thronged by the devotees of luxury, it was, in apostolic times, the centre of the Gentile

---

\* *Ad Smyrn.* viii.

† *Marc-Aurèle*, p. 420.

‡ See Harnack, *Chronologie der Altchristlichen Litteratur*, B. i. p. 381; Réville, *Origines de l'Episcopat*.

Church and the home of Christian liberty. At the end of the 2nd century there existed a list of bishops of Antioch. First in it is Euodius, and second is Ignatius, of whose life we know nothing except its noble ending. Arrested and condemned at Antioch, he is led a prisoner to Rome by a small company of soldiers. He passes from town to town on the coasts of Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia. On arriving at Smyrna, he is entertained there by its Church and its bishop, Polycarp, and he is met by delegates of neighbouring Churches. From Ephesus, from Magnesia, from Tralles they come to greet the martyr. At Smyrna he wrote four letters to the Churches of Tralles, Magnesia, Ephesus, and Rome. From Smyrna he went to Troas, and thence wrote the other three letters which are still extant. Thence he went to Philippi, and then we lose sight of him. From an early date his memory was cherished at Rome as the memory of a typical martyr.

The style of the letters is rough and ardent, it contains many repetitions, and some daring strokes of language. A forger would have calculated the effect of his statements more nicely, would have avoided obscurities, would have introduced his works to the public under the protection of those great names which made Asia famous—St John, Aristion, Papias, and Philip. He would not have written six similar enthusiastic letters to Churches in the same country, menaced by the same dangers.

Although it is the chief purpose of Ignatius to consolidate the organisation of the Church, this purpose is inspired by the desire to withstand a heresy which opposed the Scriptural doctrine of Christ's personality by teaching that His humanity was unreal. Ignatius therefore insists, in the strongest possible way, on the union of the divine and human natures in Christ. "There is one Physician, fleshly and spiritual, generate and not generate, God in man, true life in death, of Mary and of God, first passible and then impassible—Jesus

Christ our Lord." \* This union of the humanity and God-head is so undoubted that Ignatius does not hesitate to speak of "the passion of my God," and "the blood of God." In the same way St Clement speaks of "the sufferings of God," † and the writer of 2 *Clement* speaks of "Christ the Lord who saved us, being first Spirit, became flesh and thus called us." ‡ It is sometimes urged by modern writers that the early Christians were "careless" about their use of the word "Lord," and thus, by using an ambiguous word, gave to Jesus an unreal exaltation. § I am not aware of any evidence of such carelessness. The word "Lord" had been employed by the Jews to designate God the Father, and when the early Christians used it in a religious significance, they applied it only to the Persons of the Trinity. They refused to designate the emperor "Lord" in a religious sense, and this meant a refusal to worship him. And in spite of the immense reverence in which the apostles and martyrs of the Church were held, I believe that the early Christians never spoke of them as "Lords." On the other hand, the author of 2 *Clement* says: "We ought to think concerning Jesus as concerning God, as concerning the Judge of the quick and dead;" and although the word "God," when used without further connotation, ordinarily signifies the divine Father, the Son is repeatedly called God. Even among the Jewish Christians this language was usual, for in the *Didache* Christ is called "the God of David." ||

We should further notice that Ignatius plainly asserts that Christ was born of a virgin, for he describes the three great mysteries of Christianity as "the virginity of Mary and her child-bearing, and in like manner the death of the Lord." ¶

The teaching of Ignatius, with regard to the Church and Sacraments, closely corresponds with his doctrine of the

---

\* *Ad Eph.* vii.

† *Ad Cor.* 2.

‡ 2 *Clem.* ix.

§ Harnack, *Dogmengesch.* vol. i. p. 174 (vol. i. p. 183).

|| c. x.

¶ *Ad Eph.* xix.

Incarnation, and in this he follows the line of thought which is prominent in St Paul's *Epistle to the Ephesians*. The Church exhibits, under earthly conditions, that undivided life of Christ which is in her; the one episcopate with its human members and supernatural endowments is a means of binding men to God. So, again, the Eucharist, under its material forms, conveys mysterious realities and is a means of union.\*

The letter of Ignatius to the Romans is unique and full of peculiar character and fire. It is written "to the Church which has won compassion in the majesty of the most high Father, and of Jesus Christ, His only Son, the Church beloved and enlightened," in the fear that the Roman Christians will use their influence to save him from martyrdom and cheat him of his hope. Having been condemned as guilty of Christianity he longs to suffer as guilty.

"I dread your very love lest it do me an injury. . . . Good and fair it is to sink in the West, to die from the world to God, that I may rise again to Him in His own East. . . . Suffer me to be the prey of beasts, for it is through them that I may win my way to God. I am the food of God; let the teeth of the wild beasts grind me until I become the pure bread of Christ. . . . Pardon me, but indeed I know what is good for me; I am beginning at last to know what discipleship means. Come fire and the cross, come gatherings of beasts! . . . For my love has been crucified, and there is left in me no spark of earthly love at all but only a spring of living water, which speaks in me with an inward voice, saying: 'Hence and away to the Father.'"

This is exuberant and picturesque, in most complete contrast with the self-restraint of Clement. To read the *Epistle* written from Rome by Clement, and then the *Epistle* written to Rome by Ignatius, is like listening to an English preacher and an Irish preacher in the same church on the same Sunday. They do not speak in the same way, nor should we wish them to do so, for sameness gives mastery to a creed, but is a malady in the expression of that

---

\* *Ad Trall.* xi. ; *Ad Smyrn.* iv. ; *Ad Philad.* iv., vii.

creed. The letters of Ignatius are without the guinea-stamp of Attic culture, but they are golden in their strong sincerity. He was a man who was worthy of his fortune, for he reckoned it the best of fortunes to die for the best of causes.

*St Polycarp* is typical of another stage of progress in the Church, and his personality is very near and real to us. He is first known to us in the letter written to him by Ignatius, —a forcible letter, giving the younger bishop plenty of good advice, telling him that “it is not every wound that is cured by the same plaster,” and bidding him be sober, “as God’s own athlete ought to be.” Against false teaching he is to be “firm as a beaten anvil.” He is also made known to us in the unreserved and lively reminiscences of his great pupil Irenaeus, and in the letter written by the Christians of Smyrna to the Church of Philomelium, in Phrygia, with a full account of their bishop’s martyrdom, which took place on “the second day of the month Xanthicus” (23rd February), A.D. 155.

Polycarp was not popular with the Jews, pagans, and heretics of Smyrna; he saw the difference between right and wrong too plainly, and did not mince his words. When Marcion, whose pretended Paulinism made him the most dangerous enemy of the Church of that period, met Polycarp and asked: “Do you not recognise me?” the old man replied: “Yes, I recognise the first-born of Satan.”\* It was a hard saying, but not more hard than the sayings of Christ against the men who had twisted the Law and the prophets crooked. With the Christians Polycarp enjoyed influence and fame. He was believed to possess the gift of prophecy; his acquaintance with St John caused him to be regarded as an “apostolic teacher.” He was always talking about what he had heard from “John and the rest who had seen the Lord.” He apparently kept himself free from the two

---

\* Iren., *Adv. Haer.* iii. 3.

ordinary mistakes of aged talkers —the mistake of puffing out their own personality before their hearers, and the mistake of thinking that their opinion on current events is as interesting as their recollections of a distant past. For they loved him, the faithful of Smyrna, and young men and boys like Irenaeus were proud to be in his company, and in later years to describe where he sat and how he looked. To grow old cannot be a great mishap when a bent back and grey hairs get such ample compensation.

Polycarp was not only the cynosure of his own city, but also the counsellor of others. He wrote many letters to neighbouring Churches. Only one of these letters has survived. It is addressed to the faithful of Philippi, written after a request from that Church that he would send them a copy of the letters of Ignatius to him. The authenticity of this letter is unquestioned. Eusebius quotes it; Jerome\* testifies that in his time it was read publicly in the Churches of Asia. Irenaeus mentions a collection of the letters of Polycarp, and refers to a letter of Polycarp to the Philippians,† which is probably the Epistle which we possess. The Greek original is incomplete, but a full version exists in Latin.

He thanks the Philippians for their love in giving hospitality to certain confessors destined for martyrdom. He does not presume to speak in the place of Paul, who himself showed the truth to the Philippians, he urges them to be guided by Paul's writings. He warns the men against covetousness and injustice, and women against slander. The deacons are to be temperate and industrious, and young men to keep themselves from lust and effeminacy, submitting themselves to presbyter and deacon, as to God and Christ. The presbyters are urged to be charitable, and to abstain from unjust judgment and harshness. A horror is manifested of those heresies which reduce the human life of Christ to

---

\* *De Vir. Ill.* 17.

† *Adv. Haer.* iii. 3.



a mere apparition. "Every one who does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is anti-Christ, and every one who does not confess the witness of the Cross is of the devil."

Renan makes a strange criticism when he says that, if it were not for the authority of Irenaeus, "we should place the work with the Epistles of St Ignatius, in that class of writings of the end of the 2nd century, by which it was sought to shelter doctrines that were anti-Gnostic, and favourable to Episcopacy, under the most revered names." \* For the only allusions which the letter contains to Episcopacy are the very indirect allusions made in the reference to Ignatius and in the distinction which the writer draws between himself and "the presbyters with him." And the reference to Gnosticism is only a reference to the Docetic doctrine of Christ's Person which was as old as the time of St John himself.

The letter is characteristic of its writer. It is not of an original character; it is full of the New Testament, and especially of St Paul's Epistles, a fact which will not fit with that view of Church history which is based upon a supposed antagonism between St Paul on the one hand, and St Peter, St James, and St John, on the other hand. For we find this devoted adherent of John positively revelling in the teaching of Paul. He is sensible of a united ecclesiastical tradition behind him. Some modern writers of unimpeachable orthodoxy, and some of unimpeachable heterodoxy, agree to describe the letter of Polycarp as commonplace. These wiseacres are too dull to see that Polycarp is so important because he is so commonplace. Great religious convictions must be regarded as commonplace postulates before they are deeply efficacious. Polycarp reminds his fellow-Christians of what they have already professed to assimilate. At a time when a great teacher was expected to make excursions into the lanes of speculation or the mire of immorality, he

---

\* *L'Église Chrétienne*, p. 443.



kept to the King's highway. He was content with God and the Gospel. He was the pupil of St John, and he left the strong and definite impression of a great teacher, not by virtue of any high-flying theories, but by persuasive witness to what he had heard and handled.

In harmony with this love of witnessing to the past is the action of Polycarp with regard to the observance of Easter. Both in Asia, and in other parts of the Christian world, it was remembered that our Lord died on 14th Nisan, the day on which the Paschal lamb was sacrificed, and that Christ had not eaten the lamb at His Last Supper. But in Asia it was usual to keep the Christian Paschal festival on the 14th, while at Rome the chief observance was on the Sunday which followed the 14th. The result was that the Asiatic Christians were keeping Easter Eve as a holiday, while the Roman Christians were keeping it as a fast. Polycarp, one summer, made a journey to Rome, and discussed the matter with the bishop, Anicetus. He refused to surrender what had been the custom of John and Philip, but the interview was quite cordial, and, in token of continued friendship, Anicetus allowed Polycarp to celebrate the Eucharist in his place. The day had not yet arrived when judgment should be passed upon one prelate by another prelate holding the same faith but preferring a different ritual.

Polycarp seems to have returned to Smyrna in the autumn of 154. He had not been among those hot spirits who had considered it a virtue to seek for a martyrdom, but he became compromised by the action of others. A Phrygian, named Quintus, came to Smyrna, and, with the proverbial fanaticism of Phrygians, provoked the interference of the magistrates. In company with eleven Smyrnaeans and Philadelphians he was imprisoned. At the sight of the wild beasts Quintus recanted, but the rest died amid hideous atrocities. Among them was a youth named Germanicus, whom the proconsul begged to renounce his religion. The

youth replied by enticing a wild beast to free him from the world and its temptations. The mob was infuriated at the sight of his heroism, and shouted for Polycarp. The good bishop had wished to stay at home, but at the entreaties of his friends had withdrawn to a little villa in the neighbourhood. While praying, he dreamed that his pillow was burning, and he left the house for another, but a slave boy, who was captured and tortured by the police, betrayed the new hiding-place. Polycarp met his pursuers as calmly as Thomas met his murderers in the cathedral church of Canterbury. He talked with the police, offered them food and drink, and asked for one hour in which to say his prayers.

The next day he was taken to the town on an ass. Herod, the inspector of the police, met him and invited him to come into his chariot. He then said it would only be necessary to say "Caesar is Lord," and offer sacrifice. Polycarp said that he would never do it, and was then pushed out of the chariot. He was conducted to the athletic grounds, which may still be traced on the slope of Mount Pagus. Amid the shouts of the populace the bishop was brought before the proconsul, Titus Statius Quadratus. He was asked to swear "by the fortune of Caesar," and cry "Away with the Atheists!" Polycarp looked gravely at the howling crowd and said: "Yes, away with the Atheists."

"Reville Christ," said Quadratus.—"Eighty and six years I have been in the service of Christ," said Polycarp, "and He has never done me wrong; how then can I blaspheme Him now, my King and my Saviour?" With dignity he declared that he was a Christian, and said that Christians were commanded to pay honour to authority, but he refused absolutely to give divine honour to Caesar, or to defend himself before the crowd.

The Asiarch Philip was then asked to give Polycarp to the lions. Philip replied that he had no authority to do this, as the wild beast shows were now over. So they

shouted for fire, and in an instant Jews and pagans brought a pile of faggots collected in neighbouring shops and baths. Polycarp undressed himself, and said that God would help him to stand quiet at the stake, without being nailed there in the ordinary fashion. Then he prayed, thanking God :—

“Thou hast thought me worthy of this day, and of this hour, that I should be suffered to have my part in the number of Thy martyrs, to drink of the cup of Thy Christ. . . . I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee through the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, through whom with Him and the Holy Spirit be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”

The faggots were lighted, but the fire was whipped by the wind into a curving bow of flame around the martyr. The crowd saw that he was not burning fast enough, so they made the executioner thrust him through with a sword.

Thus he died, Polycarp the unoriginal, whom the heathen named “the father of the Christians,” who preferred to be broken like a crystal rather than be moulded like a lump of clay.

The abiding interest which belongs to the *Shepherd of Hermas* is proved by the fact that modern students of the most hostile schools of thought find something tempting in the visions which it narrates. Latin and Ethiopian versions of the book are in existence, but the original is in Greek. The oldest manuscript fragments which we have are written on a papyrus of the 5th century brought from the Faioum to Berlin, and in the *Codex Sinaiticus* of the Bible. Among the ancient authors who mention the *Shepherd* are Irenaeus and Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen.

But the oldest and most important testimony is afforded by the *Muratorian Fragment*: “Hermas composed the *Shepherd* very recently in our own times in the city of Rome, while his brother, Bishop Pius, was occupying the chair of the Church of the city of Rome.” Quite in agree-

ment with this statement we find that the *Liberian Catalogue* of the 4th century, quoting the *Chronicle of Hippolytus* of the year 234, says concerning Pius: "Under his episcopate his brother Hermas wrote a book in which is contained a commandment which an angel told him when he came to him in the garb of a shepherd."\* It was therefore written in the reign of Antoninus Pius, and between 140 and 155. It is considered by some writers that the book was published about 140, but that it is formed of successive sections which have been added to the Second Vision, and that the oldest parts are as early as the beginning of the 2nd century. This theory is opposed by a unity of purpose which runs through the book. At the same time it seems that the author deliberately gave archaic touches to his work. He makes the Hermas of his story a contemporary of the great St Clement, and he describes the bishops and presbyters by a puzzling variety of titles, such as had been usual in the time of St Clement. In spite of the confusion which he has caused by this nomenclature, it is evident that he recognises an order superior to the presbyters.

The form of the book is apocalyptic. The author describes five visions, twelve commandments, and ten parables. Hermas, a slave boy, is sold to a Roman lady named Rhode. He buys his freedom and marries. He has an irritating wife, and his sons blaspheme Christ and denounce their parents. Hermas sees Rhode again, and his own troubles increase his affection for her, and he wishes that he had a wife of such manners and beauty. It was only a wish, but it was afterwards rebuked in a vision. He fell asleep and thought that he prayed. The woman whom he loved appears to him and tells him that the mere desire which he had entertained was a sin in a righteous man. While troubled at her words, he sees before him a lady full of days and dignity, who tells him of the reward

---

\* *Liber Pontif.* t. 1, p. 5.

which awaits those who keep the commandments of God. She is the Church, which is older even than the world,\* for what is last in the order of revelation was first in God's intention. In the third vision the lady shows Hermas a mystical tower which six angels are building. The rejected stones are the evil; the stones that fall are the souls that desire baptism but dislike holiness; the round stones which cannot be built into square places are the rich who renounce Christ to keep their wealth. Hermas is evidently devoted to the moral improvement of a Church which needed moral improvement, and his tone warns us that we only lose our heads when we see a halo round that of every early Christian.

The essential part of the book begins with the appearance of a man, or angel of punishment, in the costume of a shepherd. The nature of penitential discipline is unfolded in various symbols, and it is probable that the gentle genius of Hermas did much to soothe and sweeten the treatment of Christian sinners during the 2nd century. Tertullian angrily speaks of "the scripture of the shepherd which alone loves adulterers."† But we must not suppose that this ancient Roman priest resembles the Jesuits who were pilloried by Pascal. Hermas keeps the golden mean between laxity and rigour.

The question was whether sins committed after baptism might be forgiven, or whether the man who had lost his baptismal innocence must be finally excluded from the Church. The sins mentioned by Tertullian in this connection are idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, fornication, false witness, fraud,‡ and Hermas particularly mentions impurity and blasphemy. The doctrine which he teaches is that penitence does remove sins committed after baptism, that the gravest sins may be forgiven, and that this penitence must only take place once.§ He apparently makes some

---

\* 1 *Vis.* ii. ; 2 *Vis.* iv.

‡ *Adv. Marc.* iv. 9.

† *De Pudicit.* 10.

§ 4 *Mand.* iii.; 8 *Sim.* vi.

restrictions in the case of apostates, but it is probable that he only refers to unrepentant apostates.

It will be noticed that the theory of Hermas does not say that a second relapse is absolutely fatal, and that it suggests that a certain penitential routine is necessary. For it is obvious that the Church is intended to intervene in cases of penitence, and not intended to compromise its holiness by allowing the process to be repeated. If I am right in thinking that a penitential routine is implied though not described by Hermas, we may conclude that a public confession of sins before the clergy and congregation was required, as we know was the case fifty years later,\* and as was the case fifty years earlier among Hebrew Christians.† Hermas values outward works of penitence, but interprets them in the most spiritual way. The true penitent must accept punishment and difficulties,‡ and this is not regarded as forcing the hand of God to bestow forgiveness, for penitence is itself the gift of God. It is good to fast and give the money saved by fasting to widows and orphans. But the perfect fast is to serve God with a pure heart and to keep His commandments.§ For small sins frequent penitence is necessary, but sadness is to be unknown in the Christian; it afflicts the Holy Ghost. Seldom do we find so strong an insistence upon the duty of cheerfulness, and this union of gaiety with strictness forms part of the peculiar charm of the book. It would be absurd to class it among the masterpieces of Christian literature, and yet we cannot wonder at its popularity. Nor, as we walk with Hermas in his still Arcadia, with the comely virtues and the holy Shepherd, will we deny that he can claim some kinship with Fra Angelico and Dante.

The theology of Hermas requires a further explanation. He describes the relation of the Persons of the Trinity in a parable which is a clumsy expansion of some of the

---

\* Tert., *De Paenit.* 7, 9. † *Didache*, iv.; cf. Ignat., *Ad Philad.* viii.

‡ 9 *Sim.* xix. § 5 *Sim.* 1.

parables of Christ. A master plants a vine and entrusts it to the care of a servant, who tends it with the utmost care.\* The master returns, calls together his son and his friends, and rewards the faithful servant by admitting him to share the heritage of his son. According to the old Latin version, the *son* is the Holy Spirit. The servant is the Son of God. It therefore has been said that Christ is regarded as an inferior being who is rewarded for his services by an adoption into the divine nature. This would correspond in a great measure with Ebionism, and with the Adoptionist heresy of the 3rd century. Hermas also appears to confuse the second Person of the Trinity with the third Person.

The difficulty of this lengthy passage is increased by the various readings of the different versions. But on examination it becomes evident that Hermas is much less heretical than he is often said to be. Following the language of St Paul, St John, and St Ignatius, he describes the higher and divine nature of Christ as "Spirit," † and says that the flesh of Christ co-operated with this Spirit. The third Person of the Trinity is also called Spirit immediately after the parable is concluded. But in the main part of the parable the third Person is called "Son." This naturally makes the meaning of Hermas extremely confused, but he apparently does mean that there are three divine Persons, and not merely two, for he represents the Father taking counsel of the Son (*i.e.* Holy Spirit) to reward the flesh of Christ, which was dwelt in by the Holy Spirit (*i.e.* the divine Person of Christ).‡

And we cannot possibly accept the sweeping statement of Prof. Harnack that Hermas gives "clear expression"§ to Adoptionist Christology. Harnack maintains that the early Christians held two "mutually exclusive" theories

\* 5 *Sim.* ii. vi.

† 5 *Sim.* vi.; cf. 2 *Cor.* iii. 17; and Ignat., *Ad Eph.* vii. where Christ is called "spiritual," as having a divine nature.

‡ 5 *Sim.* vi.

§ *Dogmengesch.* vol i. p. 182 (vol. i. p. 191).



as to Christ's Person, some regarding Him as a gradually exalted man, others regarding Him as a divine Being who became incarnate. And by placing Hermas in the former category, he is able to suggest that even the Roman Christians tolerated a theology which in modern times would be called theology of a Unitarian type. But although it is true that Hermas uses phraseology of an Adoptionist type in the parable which he invents, a consideration of his book as a whole will discover no clear proof of an unorthodox Christology.

The reasons for denying that Hermas was an Adoptionist are as follows :—

(1) Adoptionism denied the personal pre-existence of the Son before the incarnation.—But this is not denied but asserted by Hermas.\*

(2) It assumed that Jesus was a man who was anointed by the Spirit, and so became Christ.—Hermas never speaks of Him as man or Christ, but almost always as Son of God.

(3) It taught a gradual apotheosis of a human Jesus, which began at His baptism.—Hermas teaches nothing of the kind; he only speaks of the flesh of Christ being rewarded by the Ascension.

This last point agrees with the statement of St Paul in *Phil.* ii. 7, 9, and no one has stated more strongly than Harnack the opposition between St Paul and Adoptionism.

We may now sum up the result of this chapter.

It would be an affectation to ignore the fact that the literature which we have just reviewed does much to indicate the belief that the Christianity of our creeds is the Christianity of history. Between the years 95 and 155, a space which roughly covers the two generations which followed the death of St John, we have found what Ignatius calls "the Catholic Church." In spite of occasional vagueness of expression or apprehension, the successors of the

---

\* 9 *Sim.* xii.

apostles believe in the Trinity, and in the Divinity of Christ. From Rome, and Antioch, and Smyrna, the same witness is given. The Atonement is firmly believed; the Church is described in terms which befit a supernatural organisation. The sacred ministry, baptism, and the Eucharist, are considered matters of high importance by men who are too serious to fritter away their energies on mere externals, and who consistently exalt a life of charity and justice.

Moreover, this sub-apostolic teaching implies an apostolic teaching. Even if we had no certain proof of the existence of the books of the New Testament we should be compelled to say that behind the documents of these two generations, there must have been a body of doctrine which was in substance identical with that which is found in the New Testament. This doctrine is assumed and expounded. And, as a matter of fact, there is evidence to show that all our Gospels were in use, while we see clear quotations from almost all the Epistles of St Paul, from that of *St James*, and from the 1 *St Peter*; and I think it highly probable that 2 *Clement* xvi. contains a reminiscence of 2 *St Peter* iii. 10, in the lines which immediately precede a quotation from 1 *St Peter* iv. 8. This literature reveals no trace of any idea that the different types of apostolic doctrine were mutually exclusive, or that Christianity was transformed when it expanded. So weighty is the evidence, that any revolt against it must be considered not an adherence to facts, but a servitude to fashion.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ROME AND ST PETER.

#### § 1. *The Origin of the Roman Church.*

ST PAUL probably wrote his *Epistle to the Romans* very early in A.D. 56. The manner in which he writes suggests to us that the Church was not founded by one of the apostles, for he evidently thinks that he, as the Apostle of the Gentiles, embraces the Church of Rome within his own great diocese, and he speaks of his principle not to build upon another man's foundation. *Romans* xvi. gives us certain facts which agree with the antecedent probability that Christianity began at Rome among the Jews in consequence of their intercourse with the East. The facilities of travelling from distant parts of the Empire to the capital were very great; the enormous trade, the central government, and the openings offered to ambition, stimulated this constant intercourse. St Paul wrote from Corinth, and had spent much time at Antioch and Ephesus, and from all three cities Rome was easily accessible. The intimate affection with which he speaks of his friends in Rome makes it extremely probable that the Church of the capital was partly composed of men and women whom he had converted or confirmed in Asia, Palestine, and Archaia. Aquila and Priscilla, whom he had first met at Corinth, were preparing for the visit which St Paul was hoping to make when writing this Epistle.

The Epistle itself must be relied upon for furnishing the

most important data as to relative numbers of Jews and Gentiles in the primitive Roman Church. The vigorous attack which St Paul makes upon Jewish religious exclusiveness, and the careful manner in which he appeals from the conduct of the Jews to the teaching of the Jewish Scriptures, have led to the opinion that his exhortations are chiefly directed against Judaising Christians. Whether such an opinion is true or false, we may take it for granted that many of his readers were Jewish Christians who would appreciate the full force of his contrast between a life lived in the close law courts of Judaism and the new life of Christian freedom.

But the main element of the Church was Gentile. The apostle's claim in chap. i. to address this Church, his direct appeal to the Gentiles in chap. xi. 13, his statement of his priestly office exercised over the Gentiles in chap. xv. 16, show that, although the Roman Church might possibly fall under the glamour of a Judaism which was in its immediate proximity, the Church itself was Gentile in its tone. The proper names which occur in the Epistle afford us little help; the majority of them are Greek, and four names are Latin, but the Jews of that time, like the Jews of the present day, occasionally passed under names which had no connection with the language of their synagogue. We know how English Jews have disguised the names of Abraham and Levi under the forms of Braham and Lewis.

The majority of the members of the Church of Rome were probably in a humble social position. When St Paul wrote to the Philippians, there were Christians in the Imperial household itself, and it is conceivable that the Narcissus mentioned in *Romans* may be the freedman of the Emperor Claudius, put to death in A.D. 54. Ordinary slaves and freedmen, with a mixture of refined and even nobly-born disciples, seem to have formed the community of those in Rome who were "called to be saints" at a some-

what later period, and the same elements were probably there when St Paul wrote.

That the early Roman Church was on the whole a Greek Church cannot be doubted. It remained so until the 3rd century. The epitaphs of the popes Urban, Anteros, Fabian, Lucius, Eutychian, Gaius, are in Greek. The only known epitaph of a pope of the 3rd century which is in Latin is that of Pope Cornelius (*d.* 253), in whose pontificate Latin Christian literature began at Rome with the writings of Novatian. Pope Victor (*d.* 198) was an African and wrote in Latin, but Callistus, who wrote an edict on penance about 222, wrote this edict in Greek.

The Roman Creed, which was learnt by the candidates for baptism, and which we call the Apostles' Creed, was recited in Greek. It is certainly as old as the first half of the 2nd century, and may be older. It originally ran as follows:—

“I believe in [one] God, the Father Almighty, and [one Lord] Jesus Christ, His Son, the only-begotten, Who was born of a Virgin, Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and buried, on the third day rose from the dead, ascended into the heavens, sitteth at the right hand of the Father, whence He cometh to judge the living and dead. And in the Holy Ghost, and the Resurrection of the flesh.”

The present Latin text of the Creed dates from the 5th century, and is the Gallican Creed used in the diocese of Milan, in Gaul, Spain, Ireland and Britain. The original Roman Creed was used, generally in a Latin form, in the greater part of Italy and in Roman Africa. The clause, “*Maker of Heaven and earth*” was inserted to oppose the Gnostics, and is quite as early as A.D. 200; the clauses, “*Forgiveness of sins*” and “*Holy Church*” were probably inserted to oppose Montanism in the 2nd century, and became still more necessary during the Novatian troubles. “*Conceived by the Holy Ghost*” is a Milanese interpolation of the 4th century; “*He descended into Hell*” appears at Aquileia at the same date. “*The Communion of saints*” and “*The Life everlasting*” are clauses dating from the 5th century.

We may turn from considering the character of the early Roman Church to ask whether St Peter resided in Rome and suffered martyrdom in that city. Some Protestant writers have disputed both these facts, but we must certainly answer the question with an affirmative. At the same time, the ordinary Roman Catholic tradition, with regard to St Peter's residence in Rome, is open to serious objections.

The present Roman Catholic tradition, which received ratification from Pope Pius IX., is, that St Peter acted as bishop of Rome for twenty-five years. This is an old tradition; it first appears in Eusebius about A.D. 325, although it there appears in a somewhat floating form. In his *Chronicle*\* Eusebius makes the Roman episcopate of St Peter last from the third year of Caligula to the twelfth of Nero, A.D. 40 to A.D. 65. In his *Ecclesiastical History*† he makes Peter come to Rome in the time of Claudius to oppose Simon Magus. The conclusion is that Eusebius knew the tradition that St Peter was a bishop for twenty-five years, but was rather uncertain about the dates. The author of the *Philocalian* or *Liberian Catalogue*‡ of the popes represents St Peter as a bishop for the same number of years, but includes his episcopate between A.D. 29, the date of Christ's Death and Ascension, and A.D. 55.

Such are two confused accounts of the 4th century contained in documents of great historical value. But as the *Philocalian Catalogue* depends upon a chronicle made by St Hippolytus before 235, and since this chronicle depends upon still older lists of Roman bishops, such as that made by Hegesippus about 175, we may reasonably believe that at the end of the second century it was thought that St Peter exercised the episcopal office for twenty-five years. But where?

---

\* The different versions of the *Chronicon* vary suspiciously.

† *H. E.* ii. 14.

‡ Was drawn up in 336, edited afresh in 354 under Pope Liberius, and shortly afterwards copied by "Filocalus," a calligraphist of Pope Damasus.

St Peter was apparently living in Jerusalem in 51, at the time of the council mentioned in *Acts* xv. And the fact that St Paul makes no allusion to any visit of St Peter to Rome, either in his letter to the Romans or in any later epistle, makes it unlikely that such a visit had been made, even when the *Epistle to the Colossians* was despatched from Rome in 60-61. Now, it is possible that St Peter's martyrdom was as late as 68, and if we give credence to the tradition—probably as old as the 2nd century—that the apostles remained together in Jerusalem until twelve years after the Ascension, that is until 41 or 42, it is possible that St Peter visited Rome twenty-five years before his death. But it does not appear to be possible that St Peter either stayed any notable time in Rome or that he acted for any notable time as a local diocesan bishop, any more than St Paul acted as local bishop of Ephesus, although he stayed there for a period which was longer than we can confidently allow to any work of St Peter in Rome. Therefore, if St Peter died in Nero's persecution, the silence of St Paul's Epistles makes it impossible to think that Peter resided twenty-five years in Rome as its diocesan bishop.

Our conclusion is supported by the statement of Lactantius in the 4th century. He says: "The apostles for twenty-five years, until the beginning of the reign of Nero, laid the foundations of the Church through all provinces and states. And when Nero was on the throne, Peter came to Rome." \* Here we have the tradition of a twenty-five years' ministry, but in a totally different form to that which has become popular in the Roman Church. It is difficult to avoid thinking that the twenty-five years' Roman episcopate is nothing more than an ignorant, though very natural, combination of the years of St Peter's ministry after he left Jerusalem, with his labours in Rome. It may be well to quote the words of the Abbé Duchesne, one of the most

---

\* *De Mort. Pers.* 2.



original and most learned of modern Roman Catholic historians :—

“Ancient and independent witnesses give us the number of 25 years, and put it into relation with the apostleship of St Peter; but the agreement which they present as to the actual number ceases when we desire to know exactly to what the number applies. It is therefore wise to suspend our judgment. Moreover, this is all the more necessary because the twenty-five years of the Roman pontificate of St Peter come into conflict with rather serious difficulties.”\*

Indeed, it appears to be impossible that St Peter was bishop of Rome for twenty-five years, and I must now leave the subject until I attempt to define in what sense, if any, he was ever bishop of Rome.

While Roman tradition becomes confused with regard to St Peter's ministry, it remained accurate in asserting that he worked and died in Rome. It cannot reasonably be doubted that 1 *St Peter* v. 13, in speaking of “Babylon,” implies his residence in Rome. The Jewish practice of disguising allusions to the Roman government reappears in the *Apocalypse*, where Rome is also called “Babylon,” and there is collateral evidence to show that Babylon means Rome in this Epistle. The fact that St Peter suffered martyrdom is sufficiently attested by the statement in *St John* xxi. 19. That he suffered in Rome is shown by other evidence. The Roman Church commemorates the martyrdom of Peter and Paul on the same day, 29th June, and it is interesting to notice that the first church in England which was dedicated to St Peter was dedicated equally to St Paul. The present Anglican Calendar may be called more papal than the Roman Calendar for omitting the name of St Paul on 29th June while retaining the name of St Peter. June 29th is perhaps not the actual day of the martyrdom of the two apostles, but the day on which their relics were removed to the crypt near the Church of St Sebastian,

---

\* *Les Origines Chrétiennes*, vol. i. p. 73.

which was unfortunately rebuilt in 1611. To this crypt the relics were taken in A.D. 258, during the Valerian persecution. The old itineraries say that the relics rested there for "forty years," and the festal observance of 29th June probably dates from the time when the relics were taken from this hiding-place. According to another and less probable account, the relics only remained there for one year and seven months.

But while we may doubt whether 29th June is the date of the martyrdom of the two apostles, we cannot doubt that they both died in Rome. About 200 Tertullian \* speaks of Rome as the scene of their double martyrdom, and Caius † of Rome speaks of the "trophies" of the two apostles as existing in his day on the Vatican and by the Ostian Way. Some Protestant archæologists deny that the word "trophy" implies a memorial building. But I have no doubt that Eusebius, who probably had the whole text of Caius before his eyes, was correct in regarding the word "trophy" as the equivalent of tomb. In the 4th century these tombs were covered by the superb churches of St Peter and St Paul. In 846 the Saracens pillaged the incalculable treasures of these churches, destroyed the tomb of St Paul, and broke open the bronze coffin of St Peter. It is just possible that the Romans may have saved some of the relics of the two apostles, and that the vault beneath St Peter's is not empty.

About 170 Dionysius of Corinth ‡ describes St Peter and St Paul as having together "planted" the Church of Rome. St Ignatius of Antioch, § in his letter to the Romans, written in A.D. 110, says: "I do not command you like Peter and Paul." This does not state that St Peter came to Rome, but it does imply that the Roman Christians regarded the authority of the two apostles as exceptional, and the phrase would not be natural if they did not believe that St Peter had been in Rome. St Clement of Rome, || in A.D. 97,

---

\* *Scorp.* 15 ; *De Praescr.* 36.

† Eus., *H. E.* ii. 25.

‡ Eus., *H. E.* ii. 25.

§ *Ad Rom.* iv.

|| *Ad Cor.* 5.

mentions the sufferings of the two apostles in a manner which implies that these sufferings were popularly associated. At the same time he does not say that they suffered at precisely the same date, though he does say "in our own generation."

That St Peter visited Rome and died there appears to me to be indisputable, even if we had none of the additional evidence which we must proceed to consider. In studying this evidence we must bear in mind that no other city claimed to be the scene of the apostle's martyrdom, or claimed to possess his relics. When we remember how much the martyrs were revered, even in the 2nd century, this fact is of real importance.

## § 2. *The First Bishops of Rome.*

I have already alluded to early lists of the bishops of Rome. In the latter part of the 2nd century they were sufficiently well known for Tertullian (*De Praescr.* 30), and the author of the anonymous treatise against Artemon (Eus., *H. E.* v. 28), and the author of the Muratorian fragment to make use of the names of popes to date particular events. Eusebius knew two different lists of the bishops of Rome, differing not as to the order of names, but as to the length of the respective pontificates. Hippolytus made a list of popes, giving both their names and the years of their pontificate down to the year 235, and his list served as a basis for the *Philocalian* or *Liberian Catalogue*.

Now, some of the ancient episcopal lists suggest a very intricate and interesting question. Did St Peter enjoy an authority in Rome which was essentially different from that of St Paul? The answer is that the authority of the two apostles was apparently the same. It was apostolical rather than episcopal. St Paul acted as the tone of his *Epistle to the Romans* would lead us to suppose that he would act, and St Peter was not in the position of a modern pope. At the

same time most of these ancient authorities show that Peter took precedence of Paul. Peter is more prominent than his equals, as we should expect in the case of one whom Christ Himself had declared to be the rock on which His Church was to be built, and to whom He entrusted the duty of strengthening the brethren, and feeding His sheep.

St Irenaeus, about A.D. 185, says that Peter and Paul "handed over to Linus the ministry of the episcopate." \* Tertullian says: "As the Church of Smyrna mentions Polycarp as placed (there) by John, as the Church of the Romans relates that Clement was ordained by Peter, just so the other Churches exhibit those who were appointed to the episcopate by the apostles, and whom they possess to transmit the apostolic seed." † Both these passages suggest that any part which was played by St Peter in the appointment of a bishop for the Roman Church was a strictly apostolical, rather than strictly episcopal, act. They do not suggest to us that St Peter was acting as a diocesan bishop. And our view is corroborated when we recollect that John does not appear to have resided at Smyrna, but at Ephesus, and did not hold the first episcopate at Smyrna. Exactly the same conclusion is suggested by the statement made in 170 by Dionysius of Corinth. The *Catalogue*, which is called the *Philocalian*, gives the list of the first seven bishops of Rome as follows: (1) Peter, (2) Linus, (3) Clement, (4) Cletus, (5) Anencletus, (6) Aristus, (7) Alexander. Many years after this *Catalogue* was written, the list was not permanently fixed, and the difficulty is increased by the statements which appear in Irenaeus. In his fullest statement ‡ he gives the order thus: (1) Linus, (2) Anencletus, (3) Clement, (4) Euarestus, etc., Hyginus being reckoned eighth bishop of Rome. But in two other passages of the same work (i. 27 and iii. 4) Hyginus is called ninth bishop. Did the manuscripts originally reckon Hyginus as eighth in i. 27

---

\* *Adv. Haer.* iii. 3. 3.    † *De Praescr.* 32.    ‡ *Adv. Haer.* iii. 3.

and iii. 4, where they now reckon him as ninth, in order to count Peter as the first bishop? Probably; and this explanation has been given by the Roman Catholic theologian, Massuet.\* The full statement must interpret the incidental statement. The cardinal passage is in *Adv. Haer.* iii. 3, in which the two apostles are regarded as jointly organising the government of the Roman Church, "founded and established by the two most glorious apostles, Paul and Peter."† The apostles are not included among the bishops of Rome. Irenaeus, therefore, did not believe that Peter was sole diocesan bishop of Rome.

Bishop Lightfoot, after a profound study of the various lists of the bishops of Rome, comes to the conclusion that they may be traced back to the same original, and that the order runs as follows, after the accession of Linus. The figures which are added after the names represent the years of each episcopate according to the Eastern list, the figures in brackets the possible variations in the Western list:—

- |                      |                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Linus, xii.       | 7. Telesphorus, xi. [xii.]. |
| 2. Anencletus, xii.  | 8. Hyginus, iv.             |
| 3. Clemens, ix.      | 9. Pius, xv. [xvi.].        |
| 4. Euarestus, viii.  | 10. Anicetus, xi.           |
| 5. Alexander, x.     | 11. Soter, viii.            |
| 6. Xystus, x. [xi.]. | 12. Eleutherus, xv.         |

Eleutherus was bishop of Rome when Irenaeus wrote, and Anicetus became bishop before A.D. 155, for Polycarp, who knew Anicetus, died in that year.

The facts which I have mentioned point to two conclusions with regard to the government of the Roman Church:—

(a) The Roman Church was governed from apostolic times by a continuous succession of bishops, the first of

\* Massuet, *Irenaei Opera*, in loc.

† Most of the manuscripts place Peter before Paul, but there is good authority for reading "Paul and Peter" (*See Stieren, Irenaeus*), and this is accepted by the Abbé Duchesne (*Églises Séparées*, p. 118).

whom was appointed by the apostles some time before their death.

(b) St Peter was only bishop of Rome so far as the functions of a bishop are identical with those of an apostle. His position in Rome appears to have been the same as that of St Paul. St Irenaeus actually places the name of Paul before that of Peter.

The latter conclusion is strongly supported by St Epiphanius, who wrote about A.D. 375. In commencing his list of the Roman bishops he begins: "First, Peter and Paul, apostles and bishops, then Linus"; and again he says: "The succession of the bishops in Rome is as follows: Peter and Paul, Linus and Cletus."\* Near the same date a more confused account is given by the author of the *Apostolical Constitutions*, who says that Linus was appointed bishop by Paul, and Clement by Peter, after the death of Linus.†

There is, however, one remaining possibility which would make it legitimate for us to hold that St Peter was bishop of Rome in the modern sense of the word, the sole diocesan bishop. It is the possibility that St Peter survived St Paul and resided there until his own martyrdom, whenever that martyrdom took place. No support for such a view can be found in the old historians,‡ but a recent theory with regard to the *First Epistle of St Peter* would, if proved, strongly support the notion that St Peter acted as a diocesan bishop. I mean the theory of Mr Ramsay. He is of opinion that this Epistle is genuine, but that it was written long after the Neronian persecution in which St Paul perished, and that its probable date is about A.D. 80. In this case St Peter would, as the only apostle resident in Rome, be the head of the Roman Church for many years. Mr Ramsay's suggestion rests upon his theory as to the

\* *Adv. Haer.* xxvii. 6.

† *Apost. Constit.* vii. 46. This statement betrays the early tendency to glorify Clement.

‡ Prudentius says that Peter died first (*Peristeph.* xii. 11). So also Augustine (*Serm.* cxcv.): "*Præcessit Petrus, secutus est Paulus.*"

relation of the Church and State at this period. He holds that punishment for the Name of Christian is later than the time of Nero, and says that the author of 1 *St Peter* "recognises the fact that Christians now suffer as witnesses to the Name, and for the Name pure and simple."\* Mr Ramsay's description of the attitude of Church and State implied in this Epistle does not appear to me to be free from confusion, but he clearly considers that the author of it both recognises that Christianity as such is punishable by the State, and also that the State is not so inevitably hostile to Christianity that persecution may not be averted if the Christians demonstrate that the familiar charges of immorality brought against them are absurd.

Now, I have already attempted to show that Mr Ramsay's view of the origin of persecution for the Name is a mistaken view. If it is mistaken, his theory with regard to the Epistle collapses. If it is merely uncertain, he is playing with edged tools. For if St Peter died in the Neronian persecution, and his first Epistle is genuine, that Epistle is a convincing proof that Nero persecuted for the Name. Therefore, I cannot think that the Roman Catholic conviction that St Peter acted as sole bishop of Rome derives any real support from Mr Ramsay, nor are Roman Catholic writers likely to appeal to an author who is as arbitrary in declaring the second *Epistle of St Peter* to be spurious, as he is arbitrary in supposing that St Peter lived to so late a date as A.D. 80.

No evidence with regard to a supposed diocesan episcopate of St Peter is afforded by the relic known as the chair of St Peter, and preserved in St Peter's church at Rome. Beneath the modern bronze decorations of Bernini, and again beneath ancient pieces of carved ivory, there is a *sella gestatoria*, a plain chair of chestnut wood, constructed to be carried by porters. It appears to be first mentioned at the close of the

---

\* *Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 282 (4th edit.).



6th century, when Gregory the Great gave Theodelinda, queen of the Lombards, some oil taken from this chair. The chair was then kept in the Ostrian cemetery on the Via Nomentana.\* Doubtless it was already very old, and the custom of preserving episcopal chairs was common. But we must remember that if the relic had been genuine it would have been almost certainly mentioned by earlier writers. And we must also remember that popular imagination is prone to regard what is very rough and quaint as necessarily very ancient. The Milanese venerate, as the throne of St Ambrose, a chair which is far too barbaric for the 5th century and dates from the 9th. The English revere, as the throne of St Augustine, a chair which is perhaps further removed from the 6th century than St Peter's chair is from the days of the apostles.

The oldest full statement of such a diocesan episcopate is to be found in the spurious and heretical romances attributed to St Clement, and known as the *Clementine Homilies* and the *Clementine Recognitions*. These apparently date from the 3rd century, though probably based upon an earlier work. The Clementine romances depreciate St Paul and glorify St Peter, whom they represent as occupying the episcopal chair at Rome, and appointing Clement "to sit in his own chair." St Peter appears as the local bishop of Rome, the later bishops are made his direct successors. This Clementine literature was so long accepted as genuine, that we cannot reasonably doubt that it had a great influence upon Christian opinion, and we know that this influence was potent in the Middle Ages. The Roman Christians appear to have been so much gratified with the close connection which the Clementine literature represents as existing between themselves and St Peter, that they overlooked the fact that this same literature makes not St Peter, but St James of Jerusalem, the chief ruler of the universal Church.

---

\* Duchesne, *Origines Chrétiennes*, vol. i. p. 84.

§ 3. *The Authority of the Roman See.*

We now turn from a discussion of the "episcopate" of St Peter to a consideration of the ecclesiastical position of the Roman See after his death. Was the authority of the Roman pontiff regarded as supreme, infallible, and indispensable?

We must remember what kind of "primacy" is claimed by modern Roman Catholics for St Peter and his successors. Any passage in any primitive document which can be fully explained on the theory that St Peter, or any bishop of Rome, was the most respected member of a body of equal brethren is irrelevant for the purposes of modern Roman controversialists. For they assert: (1) that St Peter had a supreme jurisdiction over the other apostles; (2) that this supremacy was not a merely personal prerogative of St Peter, but was transmitted by divine right, and by Christ's intention, to the bishops of Rome,\* so that any bishop who is ever separated from the bishop of Rome loses all his own jurisdiction; (3) that this supreme and universal jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome is combined with the power of infallibly expounding Christian truth.

We must remember, therefore, that the points at issue are confused whenever Roman writers appeal to the passages which assert that the Roman Church is, or has been, free from error in its official teaching, for an actual freedom from error, and an absolute incapacity for error are very different things, and it is incapacity for official error which is now claimed for the pope. The points at issue are also confused when Roman writers appeal to passages which can naturally be explained by an interpretation which simply

---

\* It is probable from Tert., *De Pudicit.* 21, that Calixtus claimed power to issue an edict affecting other Churches on the ground that Peter was the "rock." This is the earliest known instance of a bishop of Rome making use of this text. Tertullian speaks of it as an usurpation.

allows that Rome was the most central and most respected of Christian bishoprics. For instance, it is useful to point out, as the Abbé Duchesne has done, that before the Saxon invasion the British Church was connected with Rome, and that it was also closely connected with Gaul, which was attached to Rome even in the 2nd century.\* But from a controversial point of view these facts are worthless. For no educated historian would deny that during this period some kind of primacy belonged to the Roman Church. The real question is whether the Roman Church was "the primatial Church" in such a sense that its primacy was due to a divinely appointed element, not necessarily always apparent, but of such a nature that it could, under the force of circumstances, truthfully express itself in the doctrine that the pope is the essential organ of truth and jurisdiction. I believe that there is no evidence whatever for such a primacy having existed in the Church of the first two centuries. The Roman bishop was then regarded as the first bishop in Christendom, because his Church was the first in Christendom; nowadays the Roman Church claims to be the first Church because its bishop is infallible.

About A.D. 97 the Corinthian Church was troubled by dissensions. The Roman Church interfered. Clement, the bishop of Rome, writes: "Joy and gladness will ye afford us, if ye become obedient unto the words written by us, and through the Holy Spirit root out the lawless wrath of your jealousy, according to the intercession which we have made for peace and unity in this letter. We have sent men, faithful and discreet, whose conversation from youth to old age has been blameless among us, the same shall be witnesses between you and us."† This letter was regarded with such respect at Corinth that, seventy years later, it was read on Sundays at divine worship.‡ There is a suggestion of authority not merely in the warnings which the letter

---

\* *Églises Séparées*, p. 16.    † *Ad Cor.* 63.    ‡ *Eus., H. E.* iv. 23.

contains against schism and discord, but also in the fact that the letter was written at all for such a purpose as the correction of the Corinthian Church. But there is nothing in the letter which points to any authority so exceptional that it cannot be accounted for by the staunch orthodoxy, strict discipline, and central position of Rome. The letter shows that the Roman Church held high views of the ministry, of apostolical succession, and of ecclesiastical unity; and this makes its complete silence as to the supremacy of the bishop of Rome remarkable and decisive. Any authority which the writer claims to exercise over Corinth, he does not claim for himself but for the Church residing in Rome.

Equally remarkable is the tone of St Ignatius, who wrote about A.D. 110. He writes from Asia to the Roman Church, and he gives this Church epithets of honour and reverence. He says to the Romans: "Ye taught others. And I wish that those things also which ye prescribe by your teaching may remain firm."\* And, by declaring that the Roman Church not only "presides in the country of the Romans," but also "is pre-eminent in love,"† Ignatius certainly means that the Church of Rome presided over the collection of Christian Churches in that district, and may possibly mean that it took precedence over all Churches, both in charity and dignity. All this is fitting language to use of a Church of apostolic foundation, situated in the capital of the civilised world. But when Ignatius insists, as he does repeatedly, upon the importance of the ministry and organisation of the Church, he omits what according to the modern Roman hypothesis would be obvious and essential. He accumulates reasons to prove that episcopacy is an anchor for the safety of the Church, a guarantee of dis-

---

\* The context plainly shows that Ignatius refers not to lessons in doctrine, but in moral endurance.

† *Ad Rom.* i. The phrase may possibly mean "presides at the agape," i.e. presides over the union of all Christian Churches. But see Lightfoot, *in loc.*

cipline and unity. Why does he say nothing about the Papacy, which is, in modern Roman theology, the very core of the ministry, and more necessary than episcopacy itself?

The *Shepherd of Hermas* was written at Rome about A.D. 140. It was long regarded almost as an appendix to the New Testament. Like the letter of Clement, it manifests the idea that the Roman Church must care for the other Churches, for a copy of the message revealed to Hermas is ordered to be sent to Clement, who will send it to foreign countries, while Hermas and the presbyters who preside over the Church are to read it to the Romans.\* The tone of the book leaves us little room for doubting that Clement is the great bishop of that name, although he was dead long before 140. His name had already become an emblem of episcopal authority, and the author of the *Shepherd* places the scene of his book in the days of that august bishop. But while he speaks of Clement, and mentions various grades of the Christian ministry, and is eager to uphold discipline, he says nothing to suggest that even Clement did more than act as we should expect the bishop of the largest city in the empire to act. When the author speaks of the "chief seat" occupied by the Christian priesthood, he makes it quite plain that it is a position occupied not by one supreme official, but by many officials.†

The Church of Rome was orthodox at a time when heresy was common. It was comparatively wealthy, as we can gather from the *Shepherd*, and from the fact that Marcion brought it a present of 200,000 sesterces.‡ It was charitable and energetic, for Dionysius of Corinth, writing in A.D. 171, says of the Romans:§ "From the beginning it has been your custom to benefit all the brethren in various ways, and to send supplies to many Churches in different cities." This Church used Greek, the universal language.

---

\* 2 *Vis.* iv.

‡ Tert., *De Praescr.* 30.

† 11 *Mand.*; 3 *Vis.* ix.

§ Eus., *II. E.* iv. 23.

Its baptismal creed became very widely used.\* It is probable that Rome played an important part in placing the books of the New Testament in one canonical collection. So far as we can determine, the text of the New Testament, which was employed in Rome, was in agreement with the text used in the extreme East, another proof of intercourse between Rome and distant Churches.

But there is no evidence that, either in the apostolic or in the sub-apostolic age, the bishop of Rome, in virtue of succeeding to St Peter, possessed either infallibility or an absolute jurisdiction. Nor is there any evidence to show that St Peter was believed to have had a hyper-apostolical power. Such peculiar influence as belonged to Rome, belonged to the Church of the local Roman diocese, and not to the bishop of Rome. It may be urged that my argument is largely an argument from silence, but it appears to me that, in a Church struggling to realise its unity, this silence is the most eloquent of facts.

Near the close of the 2nd century, we find a heretical community begging the bishop of Rome to recognise their Church. Certain Asiatic Montanists petitioned the bishop (probably Zephyrinus) to sanction their teaching. He sent "letters of peace" to them, but afterwards withdrew them. The whole case is singularly interesting. First, it shows that some Christians regarded the approval of the bishop of Rome as a decision which would establish their position securely; secondly, it shows a bishop of Rome acting in a friendly manner towards a heretical sect, and then changing his attitude at the advice of a man who was afterwards excommunicated for heretical views as to the Holy Trinity.†

The case does not prove either that the bishop of Rome was infallible, or that his decision was necessarily regarded as final. But even before this happened an attempt was

---

\* The creed was very similar elsewhere, e.g. the *Apology* of Aristides, A.D. 125, contains almost identical statements.

† Tert., *Adv. Prax.* 1.



made to replace the moral primacy of the Roman *Church* by the legal primacy of the Roman *bishop*. This was done by Victor, a contemporary of Irenaeus.

The testimony of St Irenaeus to the position of the Roman Church is often alleged as a conclusive proof of the antiquity of modern Roman Catholic claims. In opposing the teaching of the Gnostics, the saint appeals to the Catholic tradition preserved in the Churches of apostolic foundation. He says: "It would be too long in such a volume as this to enumerate the successions in all the Churches." He therefore contents himself with pointing to the tradition of "that very great and very ancient and universally known Church, the Church at Rome, founded and established by the two most glorious apostles, Paul and Peter. For to this Church, on account of more influential pre-eminence, it is necessary that every Church should resort—that is to say, the faithful who are from all quarters; in which \* (Church) the tradition which is from the apostles has ever been preserved by those who are from all quarters." † I believe that this passage is thought to be more favourable to the present claims of Rome than any other passage written in the 2nd century, and it deserves close attention. It is unfortunate that the original Greek is lost, and that we are thrown back upon a Latin translation. There is, however, no reason why we should be baffled by the Latin. The phrase which I have rendered "*resort to*" is ordinarily translated by Roman Catholic writers "*agree with*," even the candid and learned Abbé Duchesne ‡ having fallen into this mistake. We may confidently assert that "*convenire ad*"

---

\* Harnack, *Dogmengesch.* vol. i. p. 446 (vol. ii. p. 158), thinks that the "which" refers to "every Church." This requires that *undique* be translated "everywhere," and not "from all quarters," and it makes the last clause otiose. When Irenaeus spoke of a Church, it was unnecessary for him to explain that he meant a Church which held apostolic doctrine.

† *Adv. Haer.* iii. 3.

‡ *Églises Séparées*, p. 119. But Card. Wiseman translates "have recourse to," *Lectures on the Doctrines and Practices of the R. C. Church*, p. 186.



means "*resort to*." In the twenty-six passages in which it occurs in the *Vulgate*, it bears this meaning,\* and because Irenaeus uses a phrase which implies a journey, he goes on to speak of the faithful "from all quarters." Such is the natural meaning of *undique*, which some Roman Catholic writers have translated "everywhere," in order to make the word harmonise with their translation of *convenire ad*.

What then does St Irenaeus mean? He means that it is needless to appeal to the traditions of all the Catholic Churches of Christendom, because the quintessence of those traditions was preserved in Rome. Why? Not because the bishop of Rome possessed an absolute and inalienable incapacity of error, but because Rome both had its own tradition, like other apostolic sees, and because it was the meeting point of faithful Christians, who came to Rome from all quarters, bringing with them the apostolic traditions of their own Churches. The excellent local tradition, which Irenaeus says that the very great Church of Rome "has from Apostles," was corroborated by the traditions of other local Churches. The fact that Rome was the civil centre of the world produced an agreement which strengthened the fact that Rome was the ecclesiastical centre of the world. So Irenaeus asserts that the faithful resort to Rome on account of its more influential pre-eminence (*potentior principalitas*). The meaning of these words is disputed. It has been held by Anglican and Greek writers, and by Dr Döllinger before his connection with the Roman Church was severed, that this pre-eminence is the civil pre-eminence of the city. Roman Catholics interpret it of the ecclesiastical pre-eminence of the city, and I think it quite possible that they are right. And if they are right, we will not grudge them the text. For the adjective which is prefixed to the word *principalitas* shows that the word cannot mean

---

\* This interpretation is supported by the strikingly similar phrase in the 9th Canon of the Council of Antioch A.D. 341.—Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*, vol. ii. p. 69 (Eng. trans.).

“sovereignty” or legal supremacy. If it did mean this, it would imply that other Churches had a sovereignty also.

And even if *convenire ad* meant “agree with,” the passage would be worse than useless from a modern Roman point of view. For Irenaeus gives five reasons for the primacy of the Roman Church. It is (1) very great, (2) very old, (3) universally known, (4) founded by Paul and Peter, (5) has a tradition derived from apostles, *i.e.* Paul and Peter, coming down through successive bishops, and corroborated by the consent of Christians from all quarters. Irenaeus omits the one thing which, from a modern point of view, would be obviously necessary. He should have said: “The bishop of Rome, in virtue of our Lord’s promise to Peter, is incapable of error, and he defines the position of you Gnostics as heretical.” The Vatican Council of 1870 has declared that “the definitions of the Roman pontiff, of themselves, and not of the consent of the Church, are irreformable,” a statement which may be untrue, but is perfectly clear and intelligible.

That Irenaeus would not have said anything of the kind is shown by his conduct during the Paschal controversy.

In the time of Pope Victor (189-198) two usages came into conflict. The Roman custom, which was the nearly universal custom, was to celebrate the Christian Passover on the Sunday after the Jewish Passover. The Christians of the province of Asia kept holy the same day as the Jews, in accordance with the narrative of St John, who makes the divine Paschal Lamb die on the day when the Jewish lamb was sacrificed. The Asiatics appealed to John and Philip, Papias and Polycarp. The Roman bishops kept to their own tradition, and Victor wished to settle the dispute once for all. As the chief bishop of the church he *requested* \* the metropolitan bishops of various countries to examine the

---

\* Eus., *H. E.* v. 24.

question. Councils met together, and all except the bishops of Asia agreed that the Christian Passover should be held on a Sunday. Victor held his own synod at Rome, and it appears that he wrote a threatening letter to Polycrates, the bishop of Ephesus. Polycrates addressed a letter not to Victor only, but to the whole Roman Church, in which he wrote: "I am not scared by those who threaten us." Victor then, according to Eusebius, "forthwith endeavours to cut off the dioceses of all Asia, together with the neighbouring Churches, as heterodox, from the common unity; and proscribes them by letters, proclaiming that all the brethren there are utterly separated from communion. However, these measures did not please all the bishops. They exhort him, therefore, on the other side to pursue peace, and unity, and love towards his neighbours. Their writings, too, are extant, somewhat sharply upbraiding Victor. Among these also was Irenaeus . . . he becomingly admonishes Victor not to cut off whole Churches of God which preserve the tradition of an ancient custom." Eusebius adds that Irenaeus wrote "not to Victor alone, but to very many other rulers of Churches respecting the question which was agitated."

The present Roman Catholic explanation of this occurrence is as follows: (1) Victor's action shows that he was conscious that, as head of the Roman Church, he had the right to separate other bishops from the entire Catholic Church. (2) The supreme authority of the pope does not imply that the pope is inaccessible to advice. (3) After all, the Asiatics abandoned their old usage, and therefore recognised that the head of the Roman Church can dispose of Catholic communion.

The last of these arguments, although it is the best of the three, is very perilous. For although it is probably true that the Asiatic Churches gave up their old custom before the Council of Nicaea, in 325, and not after the Council, as has been popularly supposed, we do not know that they

submitted to Victor. Moreover, it was so obviously fitting that a festival which was intended to commemorate not only the Passover but also the Resurrection should be held on a Sunday, that the change would have been natural even if the great sees of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, had not been united against the Ephesine custom. The other two arguments are still weaker. History would very often have to be re-written if we attempted to learn the true position of domineering men merely from the claims which they have made. According to Eusebius, the contemporaries of Victor did consider his conduct domineering and unjustifiable. Eusebius says he "endeavoured" to cut the Asiatics off from communion. He endeavoured, but he apparently failed to do more than to cut them off from communion with the local Church of Rome. It was only an endeavour, because other bishops objected to his arrogance. And here I think that the Abbé Duchesne, in spite of his conspicuous candour and courtesy towards those from whom he differs, has failed to appreciate their sentiments. We do not suppose that Roman Catholics regard the pope as "inaccessible to advice," or "not ready to welcome the observations of his brethren in the episcopate."\* We know that even Pius IX. took such advice before defining the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. But it is one thing to take advice before authoritatively making a statement, and it is quite another thing to have to submit to "sharp upbraidings" after the authoritative statement has been made. The latter was the fate of Victor when he excommunicated Polycrates. And it is worthy of remark that St Jerome, who still has a unique importance in the Roman Church, does not in his *Life of Polycrates*† regard Polycrates as having been guilty of schism in refusing to conform to the decision of Victor. What kind of "welcome" a modern pope gives to the

---

\* *Églises Séparées*, p. 144.

† *De Vir. Ill.* 45.

“observations” of his brethren after the papal decision has once been made is not a matter of conjecture.

NOTE.—The following is the famous passage in Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* iii. 3 : “Sed quoniam valde longum est, in hoc tali volumine omnium ecclesiarum enumerare successiones, maximae et antiquissimae et omnibus cognitae, a gloriosissimis duobus apostolis Paulo et Petro Romae fundatae et constitutae ecclesiae, eam quam habet ab apostolis traditionem et annuntiatam hominibus fidem, per successiones episcoporum pervenientem usque ad nos indicantes confundimus omnes eos, qui quoquo modo vel per sibi placentiam malam vel per vanam gloriam vel per caecitatem et malam sententiam, praeterquam oportet, colligunt. Ad hanc enim ecclesiam propter potentio rem principalitatem necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam, hoc est, eos qui sunt undique fideles, in qua semper ab his, qui sunt undique, conservata est ea quae est ab apostolis traditio.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH.

MEN who are speaking in defence of Christianity necessarily adopt one of two different lines of argument. The one is the method used by St Paul at Athens, and the other is the method used by the same apostle in his *Epistle to the Romans*. There is on the one hand the good sense which recognises that the natural life merges into the supernatural, and that God has not been without a witness among those who have done righteousness in every nation. And there is on the other hand the zeal which is conscious of the infamy and absurdity of paganism, and exposes its moral failure swiftly and sharply. The first line of argument generally wins the ear of a university, and the second generally wins the heart of the people. The Christian who desires to be all things to all men can quite honestly use both arguments if he uses them temperately, but the sceptic takes a pleasure in asserting that the second line of argument is the only Christian line of argument, and the sceptic's assertion is applauded by the fanatics who believe that every concession to philosophy is a compromise of truth.

A zeal which passes into fanaticism is a mark of one class of the early defenders of the Christian faith. Tatian and Tertullian are the conspicuous zealots. Tertullian regards heathen culture as the work of evil spirits and philosophy

as essentially evil. And yet Tertullian himself, when he seeks for a positive argument by which he may convince his heathen readers of the truth of Christianity, appeals to the natural instincts of the human soul. The soul is naturally Christian, and Christianity satisfies its needs. He even so far forgets his intolerance that he quotes Plato to illustrate a belief in immortality.\*

The type of apology which regards philosophy as a real light to lighten the Gentiles finds its most indulgent expression in Clement of Alexandria. Clement, in common with many early writers, supposes that Greek philosophers borrowed from the Hebrew Scriptures "a little fire, stolen, as it were, by Prometheus."† But his liberality goes beyond this supposition when he says that "philosophy was given to the Greeks as a covenant peculiarly their own—a foundation of the philosophy which is according to Christ."‡ With a superb boldness he calls Christianity "the barbarian philosophy," and says that in the dawn of its light all things are illumined. Even within the first sixty years of the 2nd century Clement had true forerunners, of whom Justin Martyr was the chief.

In some respects these men were wiser than their great successors. We may indeed say that the writers of the New Testament, and the earlier apologists of the 2nd century, if they show neither the dexterous irony nor the developed science of the later apologists, are free from some of their unfortunate exaggerations. For the fanaticism of Tertullian, and apparently of Tatian, ended in schism, and the affection of the Alexandrine school for Christianity, though genuine, was too Platonic.

I will now give a brief account of the earlier apologists.

*Quadratus* was most probably an Athenian. About 125 he gave to Hadrian, at Athens, a defence of Christianity. Hadrian was interested in antiquities and creeds, and during

---

\* *De Res.* 3.

† *Strom.* i. 17. 87.

‡ *Ibid.* vi. 8. 67.



his stay at Athens was even initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries. Eusebius possessed this defence by Quadratus, and quotes a passage in which Quadratus speaks of the miracles wrought by Christ, and says that some of the persons thus healed "have survived so long that they have lived down to our own period."\* Eusebius (iv. 23), in a quotation from Dionysius of Corinth, mentions the name of a Quadratus who was bishop of Athens about 170. Jerome† regards him as identical with the philosopher, but the identification is open to doubt. The only extant passage of the apology presented to Hadrian is the fragment in Eusebius.

*Aristides.* Until the end of the last century there was circulated in England an edifying story called *Barlaam and Josaphat*. It had been one of the most popular tales of the Middle Ages, and it had been translated into almost every language of Europe. Its original popularity was partly due to the fact that its author was believed to be St John of Damascus, the famous Greek theologian of the 8th century. Within recent years a critical comparison of the different versions of the story has made it almost certain that the substance of the story came from Persia before the Muhammadan conquests, and that it is of Buddhist origin. No one imagined that the romance of this wandering story was not fully exposed when these facts were ascertained.

But discovery did not end at this point. Eusebius‡ mentions a certain Aristides as having presented an *Apology for Christianity* to Hadrian during his stay at Athens. It was believed that this *Apology* was entirely lost, except a mere fragment, published in 1878 from an Armenian manuscript in the possession of the Mechitarist monks at Venice. But in 1889 Prof. Rendel Harris discovered a complete copy of the book, in the Syriac language, in the monastery of Mount Sinai. In 1890, while this was in the press, Prof.

---

\* Eus., *H. E.* iv. 3.

† *De Vir. Incl.* 19.

‡ *H. E.* iv. 3.

Armitage Robinson discovered that a Greek version of this Syriac story was contained in the Greek version of *Barlaam and Josaphat*. Nachor, the sage who intends to undo the conversion of Josaphat to Christianity by a weak statement of the Christian case, is so inspired as to make a strong defence of Christianity, and so converts himself. Now, the speech of Nachor is the original *Apology* of Aristides, very slightly altered in order to fit the circumstances of an Oriental narration. One interesting discrepancy between the different versions throws some light on their history. The Armenian and the Syriac versions both divide mankind into four divisions—barbarians, Greeks, Jews, and Christians. On the other hand, the Greek version divides mankind into idolaters, Jews, and Christians, a division which corresponds with the general plan of the book. The fourfold division is not only unknown in the New Testament and other early Christian literature, but is, from a Greek point of view, absurd. For the word barbarian was synonymous with non-Greek, and, of course, included Jews. These and other facts point to the conclusion that the Syriac and Armenian versions are both translated, not from the Greek, as we now have it, but from a later and amplified form of the Greek story.

The versions have also thrown some doubt upon the precise date of the *Apology*. Eusebius and Jerome (*d.* A.D. 420) say, in the plainest manner, that the *Apology* was presented to Hadrian. Both writers declare the book to be extant in their own day, and their statement is, therefore, of very great weight. The Armenian version agrees with them, for it has as its title; “To the Emperor Hadrianus Caesar, from Aristides, a philosopher of Athens.” The Syriac title is: “The *Apology* which Aristides, the philosopher, made before Hadrian, the King, concerning the worship of God.” But then follow these contradictory words: “The Emperor Titus Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius, from Marcianus Aristides, a philosopher of Athens.” It is probable that the

Syriac translator, who had a liking for amplification, confused the two emperors—a confusion which will not seem difficult to us when we remember that Antoninus Pius also bore the name of Hadrian.

The book begins with a statement that the author was led to a belief in one God by observing the order and harmony of the universe. God is thoughtfully described in the language of Greek philosophy, and said to be above passions and infirmities, or the need of sacrifice and libation. Aristides then proceeds to ask what races have known the truth about God. These races are divided into (1) "The worshippers of the gods acknowledged among you"; (2) Jews; and (3) Christians. He subdivides the first class into Chaldeans, Greeks, and Egyptians. His object is to work up to a climax of superstition. The Chaldeans worship the luminaries of heaven, but their gods are not able to protect their own images. The sky, the earth, water, fire, winds, are discussed in turn. With a common-sense which is almost too serious to perceive its own powers of humour, Aristides dismisses these deities.

He turns to the gods of Greece. After a general indictment he lashes them one by one. Their tender grace does not rouse in him a glimmer of compassion. He strikes hard, for he shows that a belief in such gods directly encouraged the hideous and unnatural immoralities which were common among the Greeks. Then he ridicules the Egyptians for adoring the pig and the crocodile, the cat and the dog. He brushes aside the explanations of the erudite, who maintain that the chronicles of the gods are only nature-myths. "For, if the stories about them be mythical, the gods are nothing more than mere names." The description of Judaism is brief and temperate. It should be observed that in the Syriac version the Jews are accused of worshipping angels. Aristides ends by describing the life of Christians. The description is simple and dignified; the author is intent upon a good argument and does not linger over artifices.

While the tone of the *Apology* is not theological, a belief in the Divinity of Christ is implied; the three Persons of the Trinity are mentioned, and the birth of Christ of a virgin is strongly asserted. The Greek, Armenian, and Syriac versions have all been retouched in the place where Christ's birth is mentioned, but a comparison of the three versions shows that the original Greek said that Christ was "born of a Hebrew virgin."

It is very possible that Aristides made use of the *Preaching of Peter*—a lost apocryphal book, which appears to have contained a description of the nature of God, followed by a warning not to worship after the Greek or the Jewish fashion. It also contained a description of the Christians as "a third race," and a proof of Christianity by means of Jewish prophecy, with a promise of forgiveness to all who turn to Christ if they have sinned "in ignorance." All these points, except the appeal to Jewish prophecy, are taken up by Aristides. The *Preaching of Peter* was probably written in Egypt early in the 2nd century. It was quoted by the Gnostic Heracleon,\* and also by Clement of Alexandria.†

*St Justin*, the martyr, was born in Judaea at Flavia Neapolis, now Nablous, about A.D. 100. His father, Priscus, or his grandfather, probably belonged to the colony which Vespasian established near Sichem. He was of pagan family and was carefully educated. He read Plato and travelled from one philosophic seat to another. His mental journeys brought only a series of disillusions.‡ He became attracted by Judaism, and still more by the sanctity of Christian manners. He became a Christian at Ephesus in the time of Hadrian, and then went to Rome where he became the teacher of a philosophic school, surrendering neither the name nor costume of a philosopher. He died a martyr in the time of the prefect, Junius Rusticus, between 163

---

\* Origen, *In Io.* xiii. 17.

† *Strom.* vi. 6. 48.

‡ *Dial.* 2.

and 167. As a controversialist he endeavoured to keep Christianity from the corrupting influence of Gnosticism ; as an apologist, he endeavoured to point the Jews from the prophets to Christ, while to the Greeks he offered Christianity as the highest expression of wisdom. He writes with courage and with charm. He is Philhellenic, regarding Greek thought as a ladder to the vision of Christ. And yet the intensity of his belief in Christianity is founded on the thoroughness of his scepticism towards philosophy without Christ. He is the Pascal of the 2nd century. He is a union of antinomies. And while both Justin and Pascal have said things which we study with regretful wonder, it may be true that neither Justin nor Pascal, nor Christianity itself, is less great for comprising features which men call contradictory.

Among the lost works of Justin is a *Compendium Against Marcion*, quoted by Irenaeus (iv. 6. 2 and v. 26. 2) ; a *Discourse Against the Greeks*, quoted by Tatian ; a book called *On the Soul* ; and a *Compendium Against all Heresies*, which is mentioned by Justin himself,\* and which was used by Tertullian and probably by Irenaeus.

The *First Apology* of Justin is called *An Apology for the Christians to Antoninus Pius*, and the second is called *An Apology for the Christians to the Roman Senate*. The authenticity of these books is established both by strong internal evidence and by the quotations made from them by Eusebius. The *First Apology* assumes that Marcion is already a declared heretic ; that Christ was born 150 years ago ; that Lucius Verus, who was born in 130, is old enough to be called a "philosopher." Justin also refers to a recent event in which a prefect of Egypt named Felix was concerned. Now, this Lucius Munatius Felix was the successor of M. Petronius Honoratus, who was prefect in 148, and his period of office certainly ended before August 154. Felix

---

\* *Apol.* i. 26.

may therefore be reasonably placed in 150, and the *First Apology* about 152. The other *Apology* is also contemporary with Antoninus Pius, and was written while Lollius Urbicus was prefect of Rome—that is, between 155 and 160.

The *First Apology* is a demand for an enquiry into the character of Christians. Justin points out that the charges of Atheism, of immorality, of revolutionary tendencies are unfounded. He takes up the bold work which other apologists continued—the work of placing the defence of Christianity not only on metaphysical ground, but also on the broad, fair level of political commonweal. “A name is surely not to be judged good or bad, except in regard to the actions belonging to it.”\* And again, the Christians are the best friends that a ruler could desire—men who believe in a God whose eye no crime can escape, no falsehood deceive. “You seem to fear lest all men become righteous and you no longer have any to punish.”† As for Atheism, the Christians are indeed Atheists towards the pagan gods, but does that constitute Atheism? The Christians “worship the Father of all righteousness, and temperance, and virtue.” The Christian doctrine of the resurrection, which does so much to secure a life of chastity, generosity, and peace, has been asserted in some form by pagan oracles, philosophers, and poets. Justin then deals with the question: “How do you know the genuineness of your Christ?”

His answer is an appeal to Jewish prophecy. He refutes the objection that belief in prophecy implies belief in fate. Christians believe both in God’s fore-knowledge and in man’s moral responsibility. The objection is then raised: “Were men irresponsible 150 years ago when Christ was not yet born?” Justin answers that they were responsible, for they were capable of sharing in that divine Word who is germinally present in every man—the Word who comes in

---

\* *Apol.* i. 4.† *Ibid.* i. 12.



His completeness in Christ. And Justin says more than this, for he gives the answer that an old English poet so well divined:—

“Many a man for Criste’s love  
Was martired in Romaine,  
Ere any Christendom was knowe there  
Or any Cros honoured.”

Socrates and Heraclitus, and all who lived according to reason, were Christians.\* The same doctrine is carefully insisted upon by Justin in his *Second Apology*, where he says: “Whatever things were rightly said among all men are the property of us Christians.”

After declaring that the demons have deceived men both before and after Christ, and that polytheists and philosophers have stolen from the books which are the property of Christianity, Justin goes back to explain what he had meant when he had spoken of faith in Christ and the new birth. He describes the baptism by which this new birth is effected, and then, with a hardihood which seems to be without a parallel in early Christian literature, for the sacramental rites were kept as mysteries, he gives an account of the Eucharist. He concludes: “If my words seem to you agreeable to reason and truth, then give them their due value; if they strike you as trifling, then treat them lightly as trifles; but, at least, do not decree death against those who do nothing wrong, as if they were enemies of the State.”

The *Second Apology* is shorter than the first, and less carefully prepared. It has been evoked by a miscarriage of justice, and it is written in excitement. A Roman lady who has led a dissolute life, and is married to a man who persists in unnatural vice, is converted to Christianity. She meditates a separation, but is persuaded to remain with

---

\* *Apol.* i. 46 ; *cf. Ibid.* ii. 13.



him. He goes to Alexandria and plunges into fresh vice. She sends him a writ of divorce. He takes his revenge by betraying her as a Christian. He also induces a centurion to accuse a certain Ptolomaeus, by whom she had been converted, of being a Christian also. Ptolomaeus, after being kept a long time in prison, is then cited to appear, and asked whether he is a Christian. He replies that he is, and is then immediately condemned to death. Lucius, a Christian, then publicly challenges Lollius Urbicus, the prefect, to justify his decision. Urbicus replies: "You, too, are a Christian, I suppose?" On confessing it, he also is condemned to death.

Justin addresses his protest to the Senate, and reproaches Urbicus as a betrayer of justice. He is quite aware of the danger which he is incurring. He expects to share the fate of the martyrs whom he defends.

He deals with the argument so often advanced, that the Christians, if anxious for death, can save trouble by committing suicide. "Why not kill yourselves at once?" Justin replies that this would be to interfere with God's purpose in creation. "Why does not God interpose to protect you if you are His own people?" Justin urges that the course of nature has been interrupted by the angels who betrayed their trust. This necessitated the Christian dispensation, and, for the sake of Christians, God preserves the order of nature instead of destroying the world. Nevertheless, a destruction by fire will come at last. "But to believe in such a fire is to suppose that men grow virtuous by fear." Justin replies that it is impossible to believe in the providence of God without also believing that God rewards virtue and punishes injustice. God does not interpose on our behalf for another reason. There is a blessedness which is won by trial, as indeed is pictured in the choice of Hercules. We Christians are like athletes, and like Hercules resisting vice. The temperance and vigour of the Christians moved Justin, he says, even while he was

a Platonist.\* And yet the pagans are slaying men who are temperate in all things for committing crimes which the heathen and their gods commit. The charges brought against the Christians are foul lies, made by devils. Our truth is the truth which philosophers have sought.

This little *Apology* has considerable vigour, and there is a pathetic ring in Justin's statements that the world has always hated men of reasonable and earnest life.

The *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew*, is probably later than the *First Apology*. It is the story which Justin tells to a certain Marcus Pompeius, of a conversation which he had, about the time of the war of Bar Cochba, with a liberal Jew at Ephesus.† A man sees Justin walking in the garb of a philosopher and greets him, saying that a Socratic philosopher has taught him to respect that dress. An intellectual conversation begins; the unknown stranger proves to be Trypho, a Jew—possibly to be identified with the Rabbi Tarphon mentioned in the Talmud. Justin tells of his own conversion to Christianity. Provoked by the incredulity of the Jew and his companions, the author enters into a lively argument. A common ground is afforded by two facts. Both the disputants believe in one true God, and in the Old Testament. Justin undertakes to prove from Scripture that the Law is abolished, that Christ is the pre-existent, incarnate, risen Son of God, and that the Gentiles are called to share the Gospel.

The Jew is a gentleman of education; he not only admires the Law, but he considers that the main defect of the Gospel is the impossibility of observing such excellent precepts. It is therefore with an appropriate irony that Justin repeatedly points out that the Jews not only killed the Messiah, but sent men into all countries to spread abominable slanders against the Christians. The Jews are the authors of the hatred which is felt against Christianity

---

\* *Apol.* ii. 12.

† *See Eus., H. E.* iv. 18.

by the pagans.\* The death of Polycarp, in 155, and the statement of Tertullian some forty years later, fully corroborates this charge which Justin makes.

Justin's treatment of the Old Testament is a mine of early Christian interpretation. He does not know the Hebrew, and he apparently makes use of a popular Christian version of the Septuagint, for he accepts obvious interpolations, such as a statement inserted into *Ezra* that the Passover "is our Saviour," and the words "from the tree," inserted in *Psalms* xc., after "the Lord hath reigned." He accuses the Jews of having erased these and similar passages from the Bible. Justin is also weak in the extreme attitude which he assumes towards the Law. In spite of his opposition to the anti-Semitism of Marcion, he is almost defiant in his description of the Law. The Sabbath was instituted because the Jews forgot God; a temple was ordered because the Jews worshipped images; even circumcision was commanded that the Jews might be visibly marked out for punishment by the Romans.†

To defend this view of the Law, Justin appeals to those prophets who declare that the outward observances of the Jews are unavailing, and command a circumcision of the heart. For while he depreciates the Law, he makes the very most of prophecy. He is confident that Christianity pervades the Old Testament prophecies; and he is able to argue effectively against Judaism along lines which will never be adopted without effect. He is able to point out that the Old Testament has foretold a universal religion and a new covenant, and that it does contain more than one hint that God is not a solitary monad;‡ and he is also able to prove that the passages which the Jews of his day interpreted as prophecies of merely human kings, are frequently expressed in language which is not applicable even to the highest of earthly monarchs.§ It is quite true

\* *Dial.* 16, 17, 108; cf. *Tert., Ad Nat.* i. 14.

† *Ibid.* 56, 62.

‡ *Dial.* 16, 19.

§ *Ibid.* 56, 63, 64.

that Justin is not always convincing. He now uses as an argument some graceful fancy, such as the idea that the twelve bells on the ephod of the high priest were a symbol of the twelve apostles, whose voice made known the grace of God. And now he makes some critical mistake, as when he confidently asserts that Isaiah foretold that a *virgin* should conceive and bear a son, while Trypho, who employs the translation of Aquila instead of the Septuagint, urges that Isaiah only said that a *young woman* should conceive and bear a son.\*

Incidentally he gives some interesting information. For instance, he says that the Jews of his own day were accustomed to marry four or five wives;† and he tells us that Christ was born in a cave, a tradition which is not inconsistent with the tradition that He was born in a stable; he calls the Magi "Arabian"; says Christ had no comeliness of aspect; and says that a fire shone on Jordan at Christ's baptism, a tradition which is also recorded in the apocryphal *Gospel according to the Hebrews*.‡

The most paradoxical and piquant defender of Christianity is *Tatian*. His *Discourse to the Greeks*, which is attested as early as the time of Origen,§ is hot with Syrian spice. The writer was born of Syrian parents, in the province of "Syria, on the Euphrates"; he received a Greek education and came to Rome, where he became a Christian and a pupil of St Justin. He remained at Rome for some time after Justin's death as a layman and a rhetor by profession. According to Irenaeus he adopted opinions of a Valentinian and also of a Eucratite character.|| He believed in celestial *aeons*, denounced marriage, and maintained that Adam would not be saved. He left Rome about 172, and returned to the East, where he wrote his famous *Diatessaron*, or "Harmony of the Gospels," originally written in the Syriac language,

---

\* *Dial.* 67.

† *Ibid.* 134.

‡ See Gebhardt u. Harnack, *Texte u. Unters.* v.

§ c. *Celsum*, i. 16.

|| *Adv. Haer.* i. 28.

and used in the liturgy of the Syrian Church until the middle of the 5th century. It is most probable that he died outside the Church, but the author of a book written at Rome against the heretic, Artemon, at the beginning of the 3rd century, quotes his name with the honoured names of Justin, Miltiades, and Clement of Alexandria as that of a witness to the Divinity of Christ.\*

The *Discourse to the Greeks* was probably written in Rome. Its date is not quite certain, but is probably between 153 and 167. Tatian expounds the Christian doctrine of the unity of God, the creation and restoration by the Logos, and the resurrection. Paganism is the work of demons, and everything pagan Tatian loathes. He enumerates one Greek sculptor after another in order to show how righteous is his indignation against the pagan morality displayed by the throng of Greek statues in the streets of Rome and Athens. He denounces the horrors of the amphitheatre as cannibal banquets at which poor men were willing to be killed for payment; he dislikes the ribaldry of the stage, and would be glad to see even the works of Euripides and Menander disappear. He mentions the human sacrifices which were still offered in Italy, and attacks the popular mythology with brilliant sarcasm. Indeed, it is hard to repress a smile when he calls Hephaestus the "limping manufacturer of buckles and ear-rings," and asks what *is* the hair of Berenice, and how was Antinous fixed in the moon? He cleverly argues that Moses is more ancient than Homer, by showing how widely the Greek writers disagreed as to Homer's date. In spite of his knowledge of Greek literature, he is a Semite to the core, and scoffs at the novelty of Greek thought, maintaining that the Greeks have learnt astronomy from the Babylonians, sculpture from the Tuscans, history from the Egyptians, and the alphabet from the Phoenicians.

Therefore he prefers to be "a disciple of the barbaric

---

\* Eus., *H. E.* v. 28.

philosophy." The Greek philosophers only furnish arguments against their own theories. If you follow Plato you are opposed by a disciple of Epicurus ; if you obey Aristotle you are mocked by a follower of Democritus. The philosophers are affected in their manners and irregular in their lives. Even the greatest of them did very foolish deeds. Aristotle condescended to flatter Alexander, and was led about like a tame bear ; Plato was a glutton ; and Heraclitus, who professed a knowledge of medicine, tried to cure his dropsy by plastering himself with filth. The Greeks talk like a blind man to the deaf, and have turned philosophy into the art of getting money.

*Athenagoras* was an Athenian philosopher, of whose life we know nothing. The two books which bear his name are a *Plea for the Christians*,\* addressed to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, and therefore written between 176 and 180, and secondly, a book *On the Resurrection*, a treatise discussing the resurrection of the body and the immortality of man. The author writes his plea in good style, and claims that the Christians ought to enjoy political rights. They are charged with "Atheism, Thyestean feasts, Oedipodean intercourse." But they are entirely loyal to the government ; in believing in one supreme Intelligence they are accepting the last word of philosophy ; in the purity of their manners they give the lie to popular calumny. Athenagoras shows us that the Christians of his day kept slaves, strongly disapproved of second marriages,† and avoided the gladiatorial shows, "believing that there is no difference between looking on at a murder and committing one." Athenagoras makes frequent quotations from the works of Greek poets, some being from lost plays of the great tragedians.

*The Epistle to Diognetus*, of which the only known manuscript perished in 1870 in the siege of Strasburg, is an elegant little treatise explaining Christianity to a pagan

---

\* *Leg. pro Christ.* 3.

† *Op. cit.* 33.



who desires to understand it. The date of the work is uncertain, but it was perhaps addressed to the Diognetus who was a tutor of Marcus Aurelius. While severe in his judgment upon ancient philosophy and paganism, the author has composed what is one of the most attractive of the ancient apologies. He describes the life of Christians in a series of delicately balanced antitheses:—

“As citizens they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them a fatherland, and every fatherland is foreign. They marry, as do all; they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. Their existence is on earth but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives.\*

The author takes a severe view of Judaism, apparently including Gentiles and Jews in one common ignorance, the former for worshipping images of stone and metal, the latter for thinking that the true God can require sacrifices of blood and smoke.†

*Rhodon* was an Asiatic who came to Rome and studied under Tatian, as we are told by Eusebius.‡ He wrote before 172. He composed a work against Marcion and Apelles, describing the differences of doctrine among the Marcionites, and a discourse which he held with Apelles. He also wrote a book in order to refute the *Problems* of Tatian, in which Tatian most likely discussed and exaggerated the difficulties of the Old Testament.

Of *Miltiades* we know little. Tertullian calls him “a sophist (*i.e.* lecturer) of the Churches,”§ and represents him as writing against Valentinus. According to Eusebius, he wrote a book *To the Greeks* and another *To the Jews*. He probably flourished in the time of Marcus Aurelius. *Apolinarius*, bishop of Hierapolis, in Phrygia, wrote an apology to

---

\* *Ad Diogn.* v.

‡ *H. E.* v. 13.

† *Op. cit.* iii.

§ *Adv. Val.* 5.



Marcus Aurelius, which is now lost, and *Melito*, the famous bishop of Sardis, who wrote upon the Paschal question, and apparently against the Montanists and Marcionites, also addressed an apology to Marcus Aurelius about 175.

In conclusion, we must mention two very typical apologists. The first is *Theophilus*, who is identified by Eusebius with a bishop of Antioch who wrote against Marcion. His apologetic treatise *To Autolyceus* was written soon after 180.\* He was a learned man, not unlike Tatian in spirit, though more temperate and less witty. He gives Plato the chief place among the wise men of Greece, but attacks him for teaching that there should be a community of wives. He compares the world to a sea,† in which lie fruitful and habitable islands, and also barren rocks on which mariners are wrecked. The former are the Churches of God, the latter are the heresies. Beware of the pirates who would guide you thither! The first book contains a very noble description of God's nature, in which one name after another is shown to be inadequate to express His unfathomable greatness.‡ It is added that man can no more behold God than the seed of the pomegranate can behold the outside of the pomegranate, but God, the Physician, will open the eyes of the holy so that they shall see Him. The word "Christian" is quaintly explained as meaning one "anointed with the oil of God."

The second book describes the creation and the Fall. Paganism is sharply criticised and quotations are made from the Greek poets to show that some believed in Providence while others did not believe.§ Assuming that the Sibyl was a Greek, the author quotes her verses as the words of one of those who was among the prophets. He thinks that the poets stole from the Law and the prophets. But he immediately questions this thought, and sums up the matter by saying that heathen writers passed from polytheism to

---

\* See *Ad Autol.* iii. 27.

† *Ibid.* i. 3.

‡ *Ad Autol.* ii. 14.

§ *Ibid.* ii. 8.

the idea of God's unity, from a belief in mere chance to a belief in Providence, from advocating impunity to a confession of a future judgment.\* He is too cultured to be a bigot, and cannot bring himself to say that pagans are only puppets in the hands of Satan.

The third book criticises the Agnosticism and Atheism of some Greek philosophers, and defends Christian morals against misrepresentation. It then asserts the greater accuracy and antiquity of the Scriptures when compared with Greek historical books. Theophilus shows that Christianity was scorned for being too recent a religion,† and this explains some of the anxiety felt by himself and Tatian to prove it to be the oldest faith.

*Minucius Felix* is as far from Theophilus as the West is from the East. His *Octavius* is a delightful treatise written in the very best Latin of the period, which is the latter part of the 2nd century. It is pervaded by the indefinable manner of a gentleman. Caecilius, a refined pagan, walks on an autumn morning by the sea at Ostia with two Christian friends, Octavius and Minucius. Caecilius, noticing an image of Serapis, kisses his hand according to the usual custom. A discussion begins. Caecilius defends the religion of the State, and does not wish that questions which occupy the deliberation of learned schools should be settled by the dogmatism of a vulgar sect. He regards the Christians as equally dissolute and uncultured. They indulge in loathsome license while they shun the most innocent pleasures, not even using perfumes for their bodies. He has heard that they even worship the head of an ass, a rumour which has been strangely confirmed in modern times by the discovery of the famous caricature representing a Christian adoring an ass fastened upon a cross. Caecilius, though he defends the religion of the State, is at heart an Agnostic,‡ a modern of the moderns,

---

\* *Ad Antol.* ii. 38.† *Ibid.* iii. 4.‡ *Oct.* 13.

who thinks that we cannot be sure of Providence or Truth.

Octavius represents Christianity as a union of brothers who are children of one Father. Christians are philosophers who do not wear their wisdom in their garb, like the pagan philosophers, but in their minds; who do not speak great things, but live them. The pagan philosophers were in a measure Christian, though sometimes eloquent against vices which they practised. Probably no ancient writer, not even Clement, goes further in his toleration than our author who says: "I have set forth the opinions of almost all the philosophers whose more illustrious glory it is to have pointed out that there is one God although with many names; so that any one might think that Christians are now philosophers, or that philosophers were then already Christians." \* Octavius declares that Monotheism is the natural religion of man, for men, when agitated, say, "O God," and "God is true." If they call this one God Jupiter they err as to the name, but are correct as to the unity of the divine power. The worship of many gods is caused by the activity of demons. Christians are neither profligate nor sour. The gaols contain no Christians but those who are imprisoned for conscience sake, and Christian homes are strewn with flowers. The inward and spiritual character of Christian worship is described with peculiar power, † and the nature of God is declared wider than our knowledge, ‡ unmeet to be profaned by names. We can see that Minucius Felix really believes in the Fatherhood § of God, although his intense reverence makes him refrain from using terms which would be understood by pagans in a merely anthropomorphic sense. He is afraid of narrowing the idea of God by pretending that man can fully comprehend Him.

This leads us to consider *the theology of the apologists* somewhat more minutely.

---

\* Oct. 20.

† Ibid. 32.

‡ Ibid. 18.

§ Ibid. 31.

Justin, the most famous apologist of this period, makes theological statements which will not square exactly with the theological definitions of the 4th and 5th centuries. This is probably the reason why in later times his books were seldom read, and that the martyr's name was attached to books which he did not really write.

His conception of God does sometimes seem infected with Agnosticism of a Platonic type. God is Father, Creator, Lord, Master, and as such is known to men through these names which describe His works. But in Himself this God is nameless, for it would be blasphemous to limit by a name a God who is unoriginate, and therefore has no more ancient Being from whom to receive a name.\* His goodness is regarded too much as metaphysical perfection, and He is apparently thought incapable of leaving heaven.†

The Divinity of the Son is very strongly asserted. He is primarily the Word; He was with God before creation began. He is alone Son in a genuine sense, begotten by God, an offspring projected from the Father. Through Him the Father created all things. In the *Dialogue* we find that Trypho is puzzled by the adoration which Christians pay to a Man.‡ Justin is quite conscious of these difficulties of his creed. In arguing with the pagans he is bold enough to appeal to the anthropomorphic deities of Greek mythology to justify his doctrine of the Incarnation.§ In arguing with the Jew he urges that the Old Testament itself bears witness to a plurality within the unity of God. The angelic appearance to Abraham at Mamre was an appearance of God, and Justin urges that it must be other than the Creator "in number but not in will."||

With regard to the relation between the Son and the Father, Justin represents it as a relation of personal intercourse. The distinctness of the two Persons is steadily maintained. And yet their relation is explained as resembling

\* *Apol.* ii. 6.  
§ *Apol.* i. 21, 22.

† *Dial.* 56.  
|| *Dial.* 56.

‡ *Ibid.* 50.

the relation of a thought with the reason which thinks it, and a flame with the fire from which it is derived.\* These analogies are valuable and suggestive, but it is evident that they are not beyond the reach of criticism. For a fire may exist a very long time before the flame is taken from it to burn with a distinct life of its own, and a thought may be very slow in becoming definite. Also a fire may produce many equally genuine flames, and a reason may project many equally valid thoughts. And it does seem that Justin, as a result of the absorbing interest which he felt in the connection between God and creation, did, in some measure, sacrifice an idea of the eternity of the divine Son to an idea of His true personality. He does not so much state that the Word is eternal as state that He was "before creation," and "before the things created.† The Son was God when creation was about to begin.‡ The question which was raised by Arius: "Was there ever a time when the Father was not a Father?" does not appear to have occurred to Justin's mind. Nor was it natural for him to deal with such a question. He is busy with considering what God is to us, as we know Him in creation and revelation, far more than with what God is in Himself.

The Son is described as the "angel," § the messenger and interpreter of the Father. He is also the "minister," the agent of creation, whose action is guided by the Father's will. He is even said, in language which Arianism would have found thoroughly congenial, to have been "begotten of the Father by His will."|| But the terms "angel" and "minister," evidently mean, in Justin's language, One who is a unique Mediator, and the phrase "begotten by the Father's will," would, both in ancient and in modern times, be quite naturally interpreted as implying the true Divinity of the Son, if the Arians had not perversely used

\* *Dial.* 61.  
§ *Ibid.* 56.

† *Ibid.* 62.  
|| *Ibid.* 61.

‡ *Ibid.* 62.

it in opposition to the Catholic dogma that the Son is begotten of the Father's *essence*.

At the lowest and most unfavourable estimate, Justin can be interpreted as teaching that the Son did not become fully personal until the creation of the world was about to take place, and so not realising with St John and Origen that the personality of the Son is compatible with His eternal generation.

Theophilus occupies a very similar position. He is the first Christian writer who describes the three divine Persons as a *Trinity*. He teaches that the Logos existed eternally as the Reason or Intelligence of God, and quotes the saying of St John that the "Word was God." Before anything existed, He, as the Counsellor of God, was the *Immanent Word*, internal to the Father. For the purpose of creation the Father gave to the Word an external existence, so that He became the *Uttered Word*, although the Father still retained the Son within Himself. This distinction between two phases of existence in the Word is derived from the Stoics, and it seems not to have appeared again in Christian writings until the 4th century.

It has been said that Theophilus and Justin both confuse the second and the third Persons of the Trinity. But this statement is entirely unproved. Theophilus, in the same chapter,\* speaks of the Word as the Spirit of God,† and of the Spirit as the Wisdom of God, a name which in later times was given only to the Word. He also calls the Word "Wisdom." In spite of this apparent confusion, he distinguishes the two Persons by saying that God put forth the Word, along with His own Wisdom, before all things. Justin certainly distinguishes the two Persons plainly.‡ We have seen that the Roman writer, Hermas, who was a contemporary of Justin, speaks of the Son as *Holy Spirit*.

---

\* *Ad Autol.* ii. 10.      † *Cf.* 2 *Cor.* iii. 17; *St John* vi. 63.

‡ *Apol.* i. 13; *Dial.* 56.



But this expression has some authority in Scripture, and it is not proved that Hermas confused the pre-incarnate Son with the third Person of the Trinity. The Roman Apostles' Creed shows that this confusion was not sanctioned in the Roman Church of his day, nor is it certain that any Catholic made such a confusion.

The teaching of Tatian, with regard to the Word, is hardly to be distinguished from that of Justin. That of Athenagoras is slightly different. He expressly denies that the Son was created, and says that, as "the idea and energy of all things" the Word came forth to create. There is nothing to suggest that the Word was not strictly personal from eternity, although Athenagoras does say that the Father eternally possessed the Word as His own intellect.\* Athenagoras plainly distinguishes the Holy Ghost from the Word, but he describes the relation between the Spirit and the Father as similar to that between a ray and the sun, a simile which Justin carefully asserts to be inadequate to describe the relation between the Word and the Father.† For the simile obviously suggests that the Son and the Spirit are only temporary irradiations of one divine subsistence, and that they will disappear when their work is done.

But the theology of these apologists, however incomplete, deserves our attention on account of its merits rather than on account of its defects. We should hardly notice these defects if the apologists themselves had not laid a foundation for the greater perfection of theological diction and the greater precision of theological thought which are our present heritage. They wonderfully vindicated the worship which they paid to Christ, and their belief in a plurality within the divine self-consciousness. Having done so much to explain what God is to us, they made it easier for their successors to explain what God is in Himself. Again, we must in fairness recollect that although the

---

\* *Leg. pro Christ.* 10.

† *Dial.* 128.



apologists wrote as devout Christians, they wrote on their own private responsibility. With the possible exception of Theophilus, the writers whom I have described appear to have held no office in the ministry. Their academic apologies, like the academic apologies of our own age, suggest difficulties which are not apparent on the surface of simple ecclesiastical tradition; and it would be palpably unjust to represent the dogmas of the 2nd century as a chaotic mass of speculation because the lay apologists of the Church were sometimes a little too anxious to prove that their philosophy was up to date.

In spite of the vigorous manner in which the apologists defended the loyalty and the sound morals of the Church, they met with very moderate success. It is true that imperial rescripts and magisterial decisions combine to prove that the more enlightened pagans did not believe in the charges which were framed against Christianity by the heated imagination of the populace, but the apologists were contending against an empire of alternate indifference and prejudice. The mind of Hadrian, who regarded religions in the spirit of a connoisseur, and morality in the spirit of a Hedonist, was as little likely to appreciate the Sermon on the Mount as the disdainful melancholy of Marcus Aurelius was likely to bend before the Crucified. Moreover, paganism was beginning to make a forward movement. Few men had done more than Antoninus Pius to galvanise the religion of Rome with references to old mythology, and Aurelius was philosophically considerate towards superstition. The mob still believed that the worshippers of Christ brought down discord and pestilence from the hands of the infuriated gods, and educated men in high position were not always so exalted in their integrity as to resist the popular belief. Minucius Felix represents Fronto, the teacher of Aurelius, and Caecilius Natalis, a man belonging to the first family in Cirta, as maintaining that the meetings of the Christians ended in scenes of

hideous debauchery under the veil of darkness.\* If the interpreters of the prejudices of Roman society could speak in this fashion, the denials of Athenagoras or Justin must have fallen upon ears that were dull and hearts that were gross.

---

\* Oct. 8, 9, 10.

## CHAPTER IX.

### JUDAISTIC CHRISTIANITY.

#### § 1. *From A.D. 60 to A.D. 135.*

THE struggle between St Paul and Judaism appears to be a struggle which was only terminated by the apostle's death. It was not ended by the brilliant arguments of the *Epistles to the Galatians* and *Romans*. Echoes of the conflict are heard in the *Epistles to the Philippians* and *Colossians* (A.D. 60). In the latter Epistle St Paul is occupied in showing the futility of grafting into Christianity a false externalism. It is an externalism which is busied with Jewish festivals and abstinences and a self-conscious humility which is expressed in the worship of angels. It is a system which blends the spirit of the Talmud with the spirit of the Buddhist Sutras. Now, St Paul is not opposed to asceticism. On the contrary, he tells the Corinthians that he buffets his body and brings it into bondage. Nor is he opposed to the observance of sacred seasons and an orderly worship. He observes the Lord's Day; he makes an effort to keep the Feast of Pentecost in the holy city; he lays down directions for public worship. Why, then, is he so severe towards the Colossian heretics?

He is severe because their externalism involves a breach with Christ. The sole means of advancing in knowledge and holiness, the sole means of *growing*, is to keep in communion with the divine Head of the Church, and to realise that Christ is absolutely unique in the metaphysical

world, in the physical world, and in the work of redemption. The false teaching of the Colossians, if logically developed, would end in denying both the need and the fact of the Incarnation. Their progressive Christianity would prove to be a belated Mosaism.

Very similar is the tone of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. The best and earliest traditions regard this Epistle as the work of an unknown author, but we may be confident that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and that it was written by a disciple of St Paul. In the *Epistles to the Galatians* and *Romans* we find the Law represented, in the main, as preparing for Christ by teaching man his utter impotence to become righteous by obeying the Law, while faith is shown to do what the Law could not do. The plan of God for humanity is represented as proceeding by a method of antithesis, both in the history of the human soul and in the history of the human race. God educates man by making him hope in a promise, by then commanding him to fulfil a Law, and finally, by teaching him to trust a Saviour.

In the *Epistle to the Hebrews* this method of antithesis is replaced by a method of integral progress. God prepares man for the Messiah by using a system of material sacrifices and earthly symbols which prefigures the new system of a spiritual sacrifice and heavenly realities. Certain Jewish Christians are mistaking the transient symbol for the great reality ; they experience wistful regrets for the fragrant courts and repeated oblations of the Temple ; they are dispirited and feel that, in changing their religion, they have made a bad investment.

The author follows St Paul in calling their attention to the Person of Christ. His divine nature, His perfect human sympathy, His priestly intercession, make so strong an appeal to the human heart that he bids them consider Christ attentively before they decide whether they can bear to part with Him. Just as the author's conception of the Law does

not exclude the conception held by St Paul, but develops an aspect which is occasionally suggested in his Epistles,\* so it is with his representation of Christ. The universal Christ, who is the eternal effulgence of the Father, is the same as the universal Christ of the letter to Colossae. The conception of the one writer supplements the conception of the other, as when the author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* finds a key to the practical value of Christ's death in his idea of the priesthood, while St Paul finds it in the kindred idea of a propitiation. Both writers agree that to preach Christ is to ring the knell of the Law.

The remarkable document known as the *Didache*, or "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," which was published in A.D. 1883, and is a Jewish devotional treatise remodelled in a Christian form, illustrates the probable standpoint of the Hebrews, to whom the Epistle was written. The *Didache* describes a type of worship and discipline which may most reasonably be dated a little before A.D. 100, and the fact that it betrays no consciousness of pagan opposition strengthens the probability that the Jewish circle from which the book emanated was a Palestinian community. While the author believes in a universal Gospel, and is not a legalist, he is careful of traditional usages, and he has not grasped the fulness of Christian morality, as is shown by the appearance of the "golden rule" in its negative and Jewish form: "Whatsoever thou wouldest not that a man do unto thee, do not unto him." Christ is identified with the "servant of Jehovah" depicted in *Isaiah*, and the teaching about Christ resembles the early teaching in *Acts*. The three Persons of the Trinity are mentioned in connection with baptism.

That the Jewish Christians were sometimes guilty of anachronisms more mischievous than those which are implied in the *Didache* is shown by the letters of St Ignatius. He not only opposes a Docetic teaching which denied the reality

---

\* See the expression in *Col.* ii. 17, and the title given to Christ in *1 Cor.* v. 7.

of the flesh and of the death of Christ, but also deals with a Judaistic tendency which possibly was distinct from this tendency to Docetism, or possibly was connected with it. He bids the Christians of Magnesia "not to be deceived by the *heterodoxies*, nor yet by the old fables which are unprofitable,"\* and he goes on, "if to this day we live in accordance with Judaism, we confess that we have not received grace." He tells them to put away the evil leaven which has grown old and sour, and turn to a fresh leaven which is Jesus Christ, and he declares it absurd to "talk of Jesus Christ" and to Judaize. Again, in writing to the people of Philadelphia, he says: "If any propound to you Judaism, hearken not to him; for it is better to hear Christianity from a circumcised man than Judaism from an uncircumcised."†

There are other warnings in the same Epistle which are meant to show that the Gospel is a "completion" of the teaching of the Jewish prophets. But the strange warning against listening to Judaism from the lips of an uncircumcised man is the most significant. For it shows us that whereas Ignatius was familiar with the idea of Jews accepting Christianity, he was also familiar with cases in which Gentile Christians had accepted features of Judaism.

The features of this Judaistic Christianity were an observance of the Jewish Law, and a habit of over-rating the Old Testament in comparison with the Gospel. The writer himself had been engaged in a controversy with persons at Philadelphia who had appealed to the *archives*, i.e. the Old Testament, against his teaching.‡ For himself, he says, his archives are the cross, the death, the resurrection of Christ, and faith. Whether the Docetic teachers whom Ignatius refutes are the same as the Judaistic teachers or not, it is evident that in the first quarter of the 2nd century some of the churches of Asia Minor were partially

---

\* *Ad Magn.* viii.

† *Ad Philad.* vi.

‡ *Ibid.* viii.

infected with Judaism. The great stress which Ignatius lays upon the truth of Christ's human life and Passion, both when he is opposing Judaism, and when he is opposing Docetism, makes it probable that the two doctrines were actually combined. And the probability appears increased when we recollect the fact that popular Judaism found a stumbling-block in the doctrine of a suffering and dying Messiah.

A concrete instance of a combination of Docetic Christianity with Judaism is furnished by Cerinthus. According to a saying of Polycarp, reported by Irenaeus, Cerinthus was a contemporary of St John in Asia Minor, and the apostle, in detestation, fled from some public baths which the heretic had entered. Irenaeus is our chief authority for his teaching, which is also mentioned in the *Philosophoumena*. He denied the virgin-birth of Christ, taught the observance of circumcision and the Sabbath, and rejected St Paul's Epistles and the *Acts*. He taught that Christ descended on the Man Jesus at His baptism, revealed the Father to Jesus, and left Him before the Passion: "Christ remained impassible, as being spiritual."\*

It is therefore evident that even outside Palestine the Church was in danger of being undermined by a Judaistic Christianity. Sometimes this tendency was speculative, sometimes it was practical. We must return later to consider how this speculative tendency developed itself; in the meantime we must consider the history of the practical tendency as represented by the Ebionites and Nazarenes of Palestine.

In A.D. 62 St James, who, in spite of his different cast of mind, had been in sympathetic relations with St Paul, suffered martyrdom through the malice of the Jewish high priest, Hanan II. The Jewish Christians, like staunch legitimatists, elected Symeon, the son of Clopas, as his

---

\* Iren., *Adv. Haer.* i. 26.



successor. Jerusalem was captured by the Roman army in 70, and the holy city was razed to the ground with such care that there was nothing left "to make those who came hither still believe that it had even been inhabited."\* It became the site of a mere Roman camp, and a military colony was founded at Emmaus. In Samaria, the city of Flavia Neapolis was founded close to Shechem; it was filled with pagans. On Gerizim rose a temple to "Zeus, most high," and the public games of Neapolis became a centre of fashionable attraction. Ephraim and Judah could vex one another no more for ever. The destruction of Jerusalem not only brought with it an abolition of Jewish sacrificial worship, it also eliminated the Sanhedrim, and with it the power of the Sadducees. The Pharisees and the rabbis were now the undisputed masters of Judaism, and the Age of Halacha, which is scholasticism, set in.

The fall of Jerusalem, in A.D. 70, probably increased the bitterness between the Jews and their Christian kinsfolk. They had previously enjoyed a common ground in the Temple courts. The Temple was now destroyed, and the Christians, knowing the predictions of their Lord, had not struck a blow in its defence. Before the Romans began the siege of Jerusalem the Christians of that city had moved beyond the Jordan to Pella, in Peraea, and from Peraea to Batanea. These districts were ruled over by Herod Agrippa II., who remained faithful to the Roman government until he died in A.D. 100. The Jews attacked the Christians with a rabies of theological hatred. Samuel, the younger, inserted a special formula against them in the synagogue liturgy,† and the Rabbi Berachia affirmed that when these Christians of the circumcision passed near the doors of hell, an angel would deprive them of any advantage which they derived from the hallowed rite.

What was the theological belief of these Christian Jews

---

\* Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* vii. 1. 1.

† *Berachoth* iv. 3 (French trans. by Schwab., pp. 83, 339, Paris, 1871).

who migrated from the holy city? The mere probabilities of the situation would suggest to us that, in the days when the Zealot party was holding a reign of terror in Jerusalem, those Christians whose attachment to the Jewish state was stronger than their attachment to Christ would forsake the Church. Thus the body which departed to Pella would mainly consist of those who represented the convictions shown by St James in his Epistle. The more ignorant would probably hold the somewhat shrunken orthodoxy which is manifested in the *Didache*. The existence of this early Jewish Catholicism is proved by the evidence of Hegesippus, an orthodox Palestinian Christian, who visited Rome about 150, and stayed long in that city. He also visited Corinth. He wrote a book of *Memoirs*, a controversial work which has unfortunately perished, but is quoted by Eusebius.\* He was acquainted with Hebrew, had apparently seen in Jerusalem the monumental stone commemorating St James, and was in harmony with the Catholic authorities in Corinth and Rome. He evidently regarded the main body of the Jewish Christians as always essentially orthodox, although he has said that, after the death of Bishop Symeon, heretics began to corrupt "the sound rule of the saving message."

Symeon died about A.D. 104, in the time of the Emperor Trajan, when a considerable number of Christians had apparently returned from Pella to Jerusalem.† Of this stay at Pella little memorial is left. Possibly there is an allusion to it in the *Book of Revelation*. The protection which God gives to His infant Church in the wilderness‡ may reasonably be thought to be a description of these hidden days of the Church's life. It is true that St Irenaeus,§ who had special opportunities of knowing the facts, says that the vision of the *Apocalypse* was seen at the

---

\* *H. E.* ii. 23 ; iii. 20 ; iii. 32 ; iv. 22.

† Epiph., *De. Mens. et Pond.* c. 15.

‡ *Rev.* xii. 14.

§ *Adv. Haer.* v. 30.

end of the reign of Domitian (c. 95 A.D.). But the book is so full of wars and rumours of wars, and of allusions which seem appropriate to an earlier period, that it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the apostle wrote at least part of the book at a time near the date of the siege of Jerusalem. The *Apocalypse*, while it is full of Jewish thought and imagery, is essentially Christian, and the conception of Christ's divine Person is very exalted. The attempt to prove that any part of it is the work of a Christian who sacrificed Christianity to Judaism, has failed as completely as the attempt to prove a similar theory with regard to Hegesippus.

One pathetic little incident of this time has been preserved. Vespasian knew what hopes the Jews attached to a mysterious representation of their royal race, and he had an inquisition made for the discovery of those who professed to belong to this royal line. Domitian was equally afraid of such a pretext of rebellion against the power of Rome. He heard that some descendants of David still existed, and two grand-children of Jude, the Lord's brother, were brought from Batanea before the emperor. They were asked if they were descendants of David, and replied "Yes." The emperor then questioned them as to their means of subsistence. They possessed only the beggarly fortune of 9000 denarii, or rather a farm worth that sum, and they showed the emperor their hard, rough hands. The emperor asked them about the kingdom for which they hoped, and they told him that it was heavenly, and that it would be revealed at the end of the world, when Christ would come to reward each man according to his works. The emperor, with kindly contempt, allowed them to depart in peace, and they were received as confessors by their friends, and held a prominent position in the Church.\* The honour of possessing in their midst persons who were actually relatives of the Messiah

---

\* Eus., *H. E.* iii. 12, 19, 20.

was a source of some pride to the Jewish Christians of Batanea, and Julius Africanus, an eminent Christian writer, who lived in Palestine in the early part of the 3rd century, was familiar with such men, who were known by the name of *Desposynoi*, kinsmen of the Lord.\*

According to the story in Epiphanius, there were at Jerusalem, in the early times of Hadrian (A.D. 117), only a few houses in Jerusalem, seven synagogues, and a Christian church on the site of the room to which the apostles retired after the Ascension,† and which St Cyril of Jerusalem calls "the upper church of the apostles."‡ During this period a vigorous controversy went on between the Jews and the Jewish Christians, who were already known to the Jews by the name of *Minim*. The Christians still worshipped in the synagogues, but an effort was made to keep them out of the reader's pulpit by a close attention to their phraseology. A certain Christian named Jacob, of Cephar Secania, was honoured with peculiar hatred by the Jews on account of his controversial abilities. Two proofs of this will suffice. Rabbi Eliezer was accused of Christian tendencies for approving of an opinion suggested to him by Jacob, who enquired whether the Law permitted money gained by any unclean transaction to be used, not indeed for a sacred purpose, but for such a purpose as the building of a bath. The rabbi was unable to remember any *halacha* which bore upon such a question, and said "Yes." Jacob then pointed out to him that he was following the teaching of Jesus who had said: "That which has been gained by unclean things must be spent upon unclean things."§

Another proof is found in the story that Rabbi ben Dama having been bitten by a serpent, Jacob of Cephar Secania offered to heal him according to the method of Jesus, but Rabbi Ishmael would not allow it. Jacob began to argue

---

\* Eus., *H. E.* i. 7. † *De Mens. et Pond.* c. 14. ‡ *Catech.* xvi. 4.  
§ Midrash on *Kohelth*, i. 8 (German trans. by Wünsche, p. 14, Leipzig, 1880).

from the Scriptures that his method was legitimate, but before his argument was ended, ben Dama was dead.\* The cures worked by the Christians were attributed to magical deception or *cishshuf*, and the Minim were regarded as such potent magicians that it was said that at Capernaum they so completely bewitched a prominent Jew as to cause him to ride upon an ass on the Sabbath.† The date of Jacob of Cephar Secania may be approximately determined by the fact that his contemporary, Rabbi Eliezer, had witnessed, as a child sitting on his father's shoulders, an execution which took place at Jerusalem before its destruction.‡

The second destruction of Jerusalem, in the time of Hadrian, made the chasm between the Jews and Christians more impassable than ever. The Palestinian Christians were ruled by bishops of their own race until this time, and Eusebius gives a list of thirteen "bishops of the circumcision" who ruled in Jerusalem between the death of Symeon and the siege under Hadrian. There is no adequate reason for doubting that the names are genuine, but the list is so long for so short a period that we are almost obliged to believe that the bishops belonged either to different sees or to different sects. The divisions which took place at the death of Symeon make the latter hypothesis fully credible.

The orthodoxy of at least a part of the Jewish Christians is shown by Ariston of Pella, who is quoted by Eusebius§ for a decree of Hadrian respecting the Jews. The same writer is known to be the author of a controversial dialogue against the Jews. In this dialogue the author is represented by a certain Jason, who is called a Hebrew Christian. Passages in Jerome and elsewhere show that Ariston believed in the "fulness of Christ," in His pre-existence before the creation, and in the "dispensation" of His incarnate life. Ariston must have written between 135 and 165.

---

\* *Op. cit.* p. 15.

† Derenbourg, *Histoire de la Palestine*, p. 251.

† *Ibid.* ~  
§ *H. E.* iv. 63.

The causes of the second Jewish war were as follows: The Emperor Hadrian liked making royal progresses to ancient cities, to restore their ruins, to be greeted with festal panegyrics, and to recognise his portrait on commemorating medals. Jerusalem was one of the towns in which he took an interest, and he gave orders for its reconstruction. Foreigners and veterans poured into this new city of "Aelia." On the site of the temple of Jehovah rose a fane of Jupiter Capitolinus, and close to Golgotha was built a temple of Venus, whose very name was avoided by the Christians.\* It appears that Hadrian about this time prohibited the practice of circumcision.†

Then flamed a revolt which was a surprise to Roman official complacency. Dio Cassius says:—

"When Hadrian had founded at Jerusalem a city of his own in place of the one destroyed, which he called Aelia Capitolina, and on the site of the temple of their God erected another temple to Jupiter, the great and long-continued war broke out. For the Jews regarded it as a horrible outrage that foreigners should settle in their city, and that temples for strange gods should be built in it."‡

For the Jews were not content to see the holy city rebuilt in Roman fashion like Damascus and Petra. The Rabbi Akiba, whom they regarded as a second Ezra, fanned their discontent in one place after another until a false Messiah named Bar Cochba appeared to them to be the right man for the moment. They determined to fight, and in 132 a ferocious revolution began. For two years they maintained a guerilla warfare in the hills of Judaea, and while Bar Cochba showed some mercy to his pagan captives, he scourged and killed the Christians who refused to blaspheme the name of Jesus.§ The Roman general,

---

\* Justin, *Apol.* i. 67, describes Friday as "the day which precedes that of Saturn."

† Spartian, *Vita Hadriani*, 14.

‡ Dio Cassius, lxi. 12.

§ Justin, *Apol.* i. 39; ii. 12; *Dial.* 110.

Julius Severus, attacked the rebels and mastered them piecemeal. In 135 the war ended amid frightful massacres of Jewish men and Jewish women. Jerusalem was taken and destroyed,\* Jews were forbidden to enter it under pain of death. The Christians who came to dwell in Aelia elected an uncircumcised bishop. The last thread which bound the Church to Talmudism was broken.

§ 2. *After A.D. 135.*

In the above account of the Judaising Christians I have carefully avoided quoting the description which writers of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th centuries give of the Jewish Christians of their own period. These writers throw much light upon the actual condition of the Hebrew Christians in their own times, and upon the possible condition of the Hebrew Christians of much earlier times. But it is not legitimate to quote the statements of late writers, who said that in their day two different schools of Jewish Christianity existed, and then take this as sufficient evidence that in the earliest times nearly all Jewish Christians belonged to the less Christian of these two schools, although the New Testament is silent as to any such school. This interpretation of history would only be excusable if it were known that the New Testament dishonourably concealed ecclesiastical disputes. But the New Testament reveals ecclesiastical disputes with a frankness which is almost astonishing, and therefore we are bound to regard it as the best evidence for the doctrines of early Christianity. Under the pressure of strong prejudices against a supernatural religion, Rationalistic writers have made use of the historical method just described. Renan has represented that the Jewish Christians did not originally believe in the

---

\* Appian, *Syr.* 50.



Divinity of our Lord, but came gradually to believe in a more-than-human Jesus during the course of the 2nd century,\* their dogmas following "the same line of development as those of the Catholic Church." There is not a shred of evidence for this assertion. The Judaizing Christians were, as Renan himself points out, cut off from the life of the Church, and not at all likely to accept the doctrine of the Incarnation, if, as Renan elsewhere asserts, this doctrine was "born in the Churches of Paul."† Huxley, with greater boldness than Renan, has urged that the original Jewish Christians, including St Peter and St James, held views identical with those of the Unitarian Jewish semi-Christians of the 2nd century, and then asks: "If the primitive Nazarenes of whom the *Acts* speaks were orthodox Jews, what sort of probability can there be that Jesus was anything else? How can he have founded the universal religion which was not heard of till twenty years after his death?"‡

Prof. Harnack, who has neither the lucid frivolity of M. Renan, nor the theological barbarism of Prof. Huxley, has not been able to escape from the same historical inaccuracies. For, in describing the group of heretics which comprised the extreme Judaizing Christians mentioned by Epiphanius, Prof. Harnack says: "When, in their Christology, they denied the miraculous birth, and saw in Jesus a chosen man, on whom the Christ—that is, the Holy Spirit—descended at the baptism, they were not creating any innovation, but only following the earliest Palestinian tradition."§ Now, there is not the smallest proof that the earliest Palestinian tradition rejected or ignored the fact that Christ was born of a virgin. Prof. Harnack is merely inventing a historical certificate for that denial of the virgin-birth of Christ with

\* *L'Église Chrétienne*, p. 279.

† *L'Antechrist*, pp. 89, 90.

‡ *Science and Christian Tradition*, p. 302.

§ *Dogmengesch.* vol. i. p. 234 (vol. i. p. 246).

which he has so peculiarly identified himself, both in the book which I have quoted and elsewhere.\* The only known case of a contemporary of the apostles denying that Christ was born of a virgin is the case of Cerinthus, who had openly broken with apostolic tradition, and was directly opposed by St John.

Nor does this article of the Creed appear to have been disputed in any circle where apostolic traditions were retained. That it did not form part of the convictions of the apostles is as difficult to believe as the theory that it was derived from pagan sources. To discredit it by saying that it, only occurs in the *Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, by asserting that Paul knew nothing of it, because he does not directly state it in his extant Epistles, and by ignoring the evidence of the sub-apostolic age, is a method which cannot recommend itself to any critic worthy of the name. If St Paul does not directly say that Christ was born of a virgin, his words, at least, mean that Christ was born miraculously, for he unquestionably teaches that all men have inherited a taint of sin from Adam, and unquestionably teaches that Christ was entirely free from sin, which would not have been the case if He had been born in the ordinary way. And I cannot throw off the conviction that the author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* believed that Christ entered the world by a miracle as truly as He left it by a miracle. For he argues that Abraham compromised his physical descendants by paying tithes to Melchizedek.† Now, if Christ had been born as we are born, the action of Abraham would have put Christ under obligations to the

---

\* As in his *Apostolische Glaubensbekenntniss*, p. 24 (24th edit. 1892). In this pamphlet the author, while entirely repudiating the Divinity of Christ, proposes still to call Him "Lord," "the Son of God," "the only Son," and even "the God-Man" (p. 39). This work is one of most singular products of a school of writers who propose to accept various anti-Christian theories as facts, and to find a place for them in the vocabulary of Christianity, so that each leading Christian phrase shall mean what it has hitherto repudiated.

† *Heb.* vii. 9.

priesthood of Melchizedek, and the author's argument would have been rendered null and void.

The witness of the 2nd century to the virgin-birth is most weighty and varied. Aristides, A.D. 125, gives the witness of Athens; Ignatius, A.D. 110, gives the witness of Asia. The Apostles' Creed gives the witness of Rome, about A.D. 140, or earlier; Justin,\* the witness of Rome and Syria, for some years earlier than A.D. 150. Clement,† A.D. 190, gives his witness to the belief of the Christians of Alexandria, and is corroborated by Origen,‡ who by a reference to the Docetic *Gospel of Peter* also shows us that the perpetual virginity of Mary was actually recognised by some sectaries who might have been expected to deny it. Tertullian shows us what was the belief of the Christians of Africa in and before A.D. 200. Irenaeus,§ whose connection with the school of St John gives his evidence a peculiar value, proves to us that the Christians of Gaul believed this as an Article of Faith in A.D. 180.

Irenaeus is the first to mention the Ebionites, or Ebionaeans, who denied both the virgin-birth and the Divinity of Christ. In later times the name Ebionite was thought to be derived from an imaginary founder of the sect named Ebion, but it is more likely that the Hebrew Christians had, from a very early period indeed, been wont to call themselves *Ebionim*. The word means poor, and probably fell from Christ's own lips when He said: "Blessed are ye poor." For centuries the word had a touch of pathos in it. It meant the humble, the good, and the oppressed. Like the word Israel, it was apparently sometimes used in a col-

---

\* *Dial.* 85.

† *Strom.* vi. 15. 127.

‡ *In Matt.* x. 17.

§ *Adv. Haer.* i. 10. Irenaeus speaks of Mary with that reverence which we should expect in a member of the school of St John. He says she "co-operated with the intention of God" (*Adv. Haer.* iii. 21), and "the bond which Eve, the virgin, tied by unbelief, this bond Mary, the virgin, looses by faith" (*Adv. Haer.* iii. 22). So Justin (*Dial.* 100) says that Eve, being a virgin, conceived at the word of the serpent, and brought forth death. Mary, the virgin, received joy at the word of Gabriel, and became mother of the Son of God.

lective sense, to mean the pious nucleus of the nation.\* It was used by the Judaising Christians of the time of Epiphanius simply to describe their apostolic and voluntary poverty.† More orthodox Christians thought that the name implied a reproach, and meant not "poor in spirit," but "poor in wits."‡

Although the name of these Ebionaeans first occurs in Irenaeus, a description of opinions which are identical with theirs is found in Justin Martyr,§ whose writings fall between the years 150 and 160. Justin writes as though the interests of Catholic Christianity were already secured against Judaism, but he speaks of the Jewish Christians, and divides them into two sections. He does not inform us whether they formed two definitely organised communities. The *first* section consists of Judaising Christians who regard the observance of the Mosaic Law as absolutely necessary to salvation, and therefore hold no fellowship with Christians who differ from them. There can be no reasonable doubt that this section is identical with the party which Justin describes as confessing the Messiahship of Jesus, but regarding Him as simply human. The *second* section consists of Judaising Christians who, as Jews by birth, submit to circumcision and the Mosaic Law, but do not regard the Law as binding on Gentile Christians, with whom they hold intercourse. The manner in which Justin refers to this latter class makes it almost certain that they believed in the Divinity of Christ.

Justin is the first writer who gives a clear account of the Judaising Christians, and his acquaintance with Palestine gives peculiar value to his evidence. The latest precise evidence which we possess is in remarkable harmony with the earliest. St Jerome, at the close of the 4th century, associated with the Hebrew Christians of Palestine, and

---

\* Ps. ix. 18 ; xl. 17 ; lxx. 5.

† Haer. xxx. 17.

‡ Eus., *H.E.* iii. 27 ; Origen, *De Princ.* iv. 22.

§ *Dial.* 47, 48.

was acquainted with their language. He speaks of them under the names of Ebionites and Nazarenes. Some recent opponents of orthodox Christianity\* have maintained that Jerome uses these names synonymously, and that there was only one group of Jewish Christians, who from the beginning called themselves Nazarenes or Ebionites. From this it is inferred that nearly all the Jewish Christians of the 2nd century rejected the Divinity of Christ, and that the Palestinian Christians of the 1st century had done the same.

But Jerome's words do not permit us to be sure that he used the names Ebionite and Nazarene synonymously. He only says that the Ebionites "are *popularly* called Nazarenes."† Still less does Jerome countenance the idea that a denial of the Divinity of Jesus Christ was the distinctive mark of Hebrew Christianity. In the single passage where he can possibly be interpreted as confusing the Ebionites with the Nazarenes, he says that the Jewish Christians believe that Christ is "the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary."‡ In other passages he distinguishes the Ebionites from the Nazarenes, whom he calls "companions of the Ebionites";§ and he shows that the Ebionites denied Christ's Divinity and repudiated St Paul, while the Nazarenes acknowledged St Paul's work,|| and although observing the Mosaic Law themselves, taught that it was only binding on "those of the stock of the race of Israel."¶

The combined evidence of Jerome and Justin is fatal to the theory that original Christianity was only Unitarianism decorated with Jewish trappings, and that the Ebionites faithfully represented the theology of the apostles. For Justin and Jerome had a personal knowledge of the people

\* Harnack, *Dogmengesch.* vol. i. p. 285 (vol. i. p. 301). Huxley, *op. cit.* p. 298, also confuses Nazarene and Ebionite belief.

† *Ep. ad Aug.* 89.

‡ *Loc. cit.*

§ *In Isa.* i. 12.

|| *Ibid.* ix. i. (*cf. in Matt.* xii. 1).

¶ *In Isa.* i. 12 (*cf. Ibid.* viii. 12).

whom they describe, and they had no possible motive for disguising any heretical opinions which these people may have held. The account which they give corresponds with the situation which is implied in Hegesippus and in the New Testament. The "earliest Palestinian tradition" concerning Christianity cherished the Mosaic Law and an undeveloped theology, but we have no reason to brand it as Unitarian.

On the other hand, there are ancient writers who are interested in describing heresies and mention a Judaistic Christianity of a Unitarian type. These writers extend from the year 180 to 320. They are Irenaeus, Tertullian, the author of *Philosophoumena*, Origen, and Eusebius. None of these five writers used the word "Nazarene," a title which is used of orthodox Christians in *Acts* xxiv. 5, used again in the *Dialogue of Jason and Papiscus* by the orthodox Ariston, appears again in Jerome, and is still used by Muhammadans to describe an orthodox Christian. The word Ebionaeon is first used by Irenaeus. The people whom he describes have only a *Gospel according to Matthew*, reject St Paul, deny the virgin-birth and Divinity of Christ, and venerate Jerusalem as the House of God. "They reject the infusion of the heavenly wine, and will have it to be earthly water alone, not receiving God into that which they mingle."\* By this Irenaeus means that the Ebionaeans deny that the Word was united with human flesh; and his statement seems to imply that they used water without wine in the Eucharist, as was done by the Ebionites described by Epiphanius. Irenaeus says that the Ebionites "try to explain the prophetic writings with peculiar accuracy" (*Adv. Haer.* i. 26).

The author of the *Philosophoumena* invents a founder of the sect, and names him "Ebion." The people whom he describes are strictly Unitarian. They believe that Jesus

---

\* *Adv. Haer.* v. 1.



was the child of Joseph and Mary; they hold that Jesus was justified by keeping the Law, and that they themselves can become Christs by the same process (*Philos.* vii. 34, 35).

Tertullian's statements are brief but important, and it is strange that they should have met with so little attention from some modern writers. He opposes the followers of "Hebion," or "Ebion," on two points. The first is their denial of the virgin-birth; the second is their assertion that Jesus is "mere man," and their "not thinking that Jesus is the Son of God." That is to say, Tertullian attacks the Ebionites for denying what Jerome says that the Nazarenes assert (*De Virg. Vel.* 6; *de Carne*, 14; *de Praescr.* 33).

Origen and Eusebius give substantially the same account of the Ebionaeans. They describe two sections of the party. Both keep the Law, both reject St Paul. Eusebius says that both only use the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*. He also says that both sections of the Ebionaeans deny the Divinity of Christ, but that one section admits the virgin-birth.\* Origen says that one section accepts the virgin-birth, while the other denies it,† but he makes it clear that even those who accept the virgin-birth of Christ deny His Divinity.‡

Our conclusion is that the Ebionites universally rejected the Divinity of Christ, and that their sect arose in the 2nd century, probably after the death of Symeon in A.D. 104. We have no plain warrant for supposing that the names Ebionite and Nazarene were identical at any period, and not the smallest warrant for supposing that the Unitarian Ebionites represented a primitive and apostolic type of Christianity.

It is therefore strange that Dr Hort should say that Epiphanius has "perhaps contributed most to modern confusions by making two separate sects, Ebionaeans and Nazaraeans."§ We may remark that the "confusion" is

\* Eus., *H. E.* iii. 27.

‡ *In Matt.* t. xvi. 12.

† *c. Celsum*, v. 61.

§ *Judaistic Christianity*, p. 199.



shared by Augustine, who expressly distinguishes the two parties on the ground that the Nazarenes accept Christ as "the Son of God," while the Ebionites hold Him to be only a man (*Ep.* lxxxii. 10; *de Haer.* ix.).

Epiphanius speaks with considerable caution. In his day the Jewish Christians were still numerous; they were to be found "in the town of Beroea, in Coele Syria, and also in Decapolis, near Pella, and in Basanitis, at the town commonly called Kokabe, but Chochabe in Hebrew."\* The Ebionaeans were also to be found in Cyprus, Asia Minor, and Rome. They believed that Jesus was the Son of Joseph, and their New Testament contained only a Hebrew *Gospel of St Matthew*. Epiphanius says that the Nazaraeans use both the New Testament and the Old. He refuses to make a definite statement as to the Christology of the Nazaraeans. He says that they teach that Jesus is the *pais* of God, a word which may signify child or servant; he is unable to say whether they believe Him to be "mere man," or born of Mary and the Holy Ghost. This uncertainty is removed for us by St Jerome, who had personal intercourse with the Jewish Christians, and we can have no reasonable doubt that the Nazarenes, or Nazaraeans, held the somewhat shrunken orthodoxy which appears in the *Didache*. Jesus is to them the *pais* of God, and the Son of God; what this implies they have not, perhaps, troubled to enquire. We do not know when the Nazarenes gave up the observance of the Law, but they are probably represented by the various Oriental sects which still use a Syriac liturgy.

Of the Hebrew *Gospel of St Matthew*, which was employed by the Jewish Christians, some fragments still remain. It is frequently referred to by early Greek and Latin Christian writers as "the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*." Clement and Origen are the earliest writers who can be definitely said

---

\* *Haer.* xxix. 7.

to have employed it. The Gospel appears again in Eusebius, Jerome, and Epiphanius. In the Catalogue of Nicephorus, patriarch of Constantinople, in the 9th century, it is said to contain 2200 lines. The small fragments which now exist represent two editions; one in Greek, belonging to a Gnostic Ebionism which I will soon describe. It is marked by a certain stress which it lays upon vegetarianism. The other was in Aramaic, and was translated into Greek and Latin by Jerome. It is Nazarene, but shows a Gnostic influence, for the Holy Spirit is represented as female, and Christ calls her His mother. It is certain that the Gospel does not represent an original Aramaic version of *St Matthew*. Some of Jerome's contemporaries regarded it as the original of *St Matthew*, but Jerome himself did not.\* The book may have contained some original matter, but it is of a debased and secondary character. In opposition to Prof. Harnack, who is inclined to place it between 65 and 70 A.D., Prof. Armitage Robinson points out that the remaining fragments suggest the hand of a compiler who not only knows the Septuagint, but makes use of the *Gospels of St Matthew* and *St John*.†

In addition to the Nazarenes and the Ebionites, there existed a sect which was sometimes called Ebionite, but combined Ebionism with theories of a Gnostic character, and with an asceticism which resembled that of the old Jewish Essenes. Modern writers have given this sect the appropriate name of Essene Ebionites. The ancient writers who describe them are Origen, the author of the *Philosophoumena*, and Epiphanius. The two former connect these sectaries with a teacher named Elkesai, who wrote a book which was highly venerated by his followers, and which professed to contain a revelation which was made in the time of Trajan. This book taught that the grossest sins might obtain forgiveness if the sinner submitted to a new baptism; it was

---

\* *In Matt.* xii. 17.

† *Expositor*, March 1897. For the fragments, see Gebhardt u. Harnack, *Texte u. Unters.* v.

brought to Rome by Alcibiades of Apamea, in Syria, about 225. The Hebrew formula, used as a charm by the converts of the sect, is given by Epiphanius. It means: "I bear witness against you in the day of the great judgment. Salvation." \*

Epiphanius distributes his account of these Essene Ebionites between his accounts of the Essenes, Ebionites, and Sampsaecans. † They represented the Gospel as the primeval religion, declared the sacrificial system of the Old Testament not to be divine, and regarded fire as impure. St Paul was bitterly ridiculed, circumcision and the Sabbath were kept, bread and water, without wine, were used in the Eucharist, and frequent lustrations were employed in addition to baptism. The eating of flesh was opposed, and it was denied that Abraham really killed a calf for food, and that Noah was really bidden to "kill and eat." Marriage appears to have been inculcated on all. In addition to a Hebrew *Gospel of Matthew*, the Essene Ebionites possessed various apocryphal books, such as the *Journeys of Peter* by Clement, and the *Ascent of James*. In these writings the apostles were represented as strict vegetarians. A trace of Oriental Dualism is to be found in the belief that God has entrusted this world to the rule of the Devil. The view of Christ is higher than the view held by the Unitarian Ebionites. It was believed that He was a created Being, higher than the angels, and that He came down to the lower world in the person of Adam and of other patriarchs, and again appeared in Jesus. He was called the Great King. No Jewish prophets were acknowledged after Aaron. It is highly probable that Symmachus, who translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek in the 2nd century, was a member of this sect, as he is stated to have identified Christ with Adam, and taught that He was "a soul common to our race." ‡

---

\* See Hilgenfeld, *Elxai Fragmenta* in his *Novum Testamentum extra canonem*.

† *Haer.* xix.; xxx.; liii.

‡ Victorinus Rhetor, in *Gal.* i. 19; ii. 26.

With the activity of these Gnostic Ebionites we must connect the Clementine apocryphal literature. These spurious works, in their present form, apparently date from the first half of the 3rd century, and have been worked over by Catholic hands. They bear the name of St Clement of Rome, and include : (1) *Twenty Homilies*, called by Eusebius, dialogues ; at the head of them there is a *Letter of Peter to James* and a *Letter of Clement to James*, intended to support the authenticity of the *Homilies* ; (2) *The Recognitions*, a work which exists only in Latin, and is known by its Latin name.

Clement tells how he has been converted by Barnabas, and then presented to Peter, whose biographer he becomes. The tale next recounts the controversies of Peter and Simon Magus at Jerusalem and Rome ; the preaching of Peter at Tripolis ; the discovery by Clement of his shipwrecked mother and brothers ; the refutation by Clement of his own father, Faustinianus ; the conversion of Faustinianus by Peter. Such is the romance of the *Recognitions*. The same fables appear in the *Homilies*. Polytheism is opposed, the absolute unity of God is taught, and a Stoic tone is apparent. The prominence given to the Devil, the ignoring of the freedom of the human will, and the notion that all things proceed from God in antithetical pairs, are points which are in touch with the Gnostic Ebionism described by Epiphanius. The earliest witness to the Clementine apocrypha is Origen, who quotes the tenth book of the *Recognitions*.\* While this literature attests the reputation of Clement during the 2nd and 3rd centuries, it also greatly assisted the growth of the authority of the Roman See.†

The Elkesaites existed in Arabia as late as the 10th century, and either they, or some similar school of Ebionites, exercised an influence on the origin of Islam ; for it is certain that Muhammad incorporated into his own system

---

\* *Philocalia*, 23.

† See p. 156.

many survivals of a syncretistic and semi-Jewish creed.

At the close of the 6th century Judaism had made numerous converts among the tribes of Arabia; and it cannot be questioned that Muhammad was influenced by Judaism, although he turned relentlessly against the Jews when he had to shape a policy of his own, and bade his followers pray no longer towards Jerusalem, but towards Mecca. Muhammad quotes from the Jewish Mishna, and gives injunctions taken from the Gemara—such as those which command that purifications are to be made with sand in default of water, and that prayer may be shortened in moments of danger. But Muhammad was also influenced by Judaistic Christianity. In the desert of Arabia dwelt certain ascetics given to meditation. They were called *Ḥanīfs*, a word which probably means “penitents,” but which is used in a depreciatory sense in the Talmud, where the *Ḥanīfs* are denounced. That they were considered to be more Christian than Jewish is shown by an Arab verse ascribed to *Ṣakr-al-Ghay*, for the poet, in describing a thunder-cloud, says: “Its fringes on the mountain ridge are like Christians celebrating a banquet when they have found a *Ḥanīf*.” They possessed “the Law and the Gospel,” and certain apocryphal “rolls of Abraham and Moses”—rolls which were probably collections of Jewish Midrash, containing gorgeous tales of angels. They believed in one God, and it is probably from them that Muhammad learnt to lay such stress upon the coming judgment of God.

As it is, the *Kurân* presents us with a grotesque mixture of Jewish and Christian teaching. In the retention of circumcision; in the belief that Jesus is one of the six successive founders of true religion; in the denial that Jesus is the Son of God, when the very word which Muhammad uses for “Son” shows that he did not understand what the phrase meant on Christian lips; in the repudiation of the Trinity, and identification of the Holy Ghost with Gabriel;

in its parody of the Eucharist ; in the Docetic opinion that Christ died only in appearance ; in the confusion of Mary with Miriam ; in the elaborate angelology ; in the tiers of heavens occupied by saints from Adam to John the Baptist, we find that Islam has crystallised the dreams of an ignorant Judaising Christianity of an Essene character.

And when we recollect that Islam has wiped out the Christianity which covered Roman Africa and penetrated to the Soudan, and that it has crushed the long line of bishoprics which existed in Persia and Arabia, and still thwarts Christianity at every turn, we must admit that it has seldom been granted to an enemy to wreak such a revenge as the preachers of "another Gospel" have had upon the converts of St Paul.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE GNOSTICS.

#### § 1. *The Origin and Nature of Gnosticism.*

THE beginnings of Gnosticism in the Roman Empire are hidden in some obscurity. Perhaps Gnosticism arose naturally from conditions which already existed within the Empire, for it is little more than the spiritualism of minds which were not capable of being spiritual. Yet this spiritualism has points of contact with Oriental thought, and may have been transplanted from Indian soil, like the "esoteric Buddhism" of the 19th century. In its dreamy and colourless idea of the supreme Being, with His phantasmagoria of emanations, Gnosticism reminds us of the Hindu Vedânta philosophy, which is the opium of Indian religious life. And Gnosticism reminds us again of the Hindu theory that matter, so far as it can be said to exist, is an evil, and that sin is removed by the knowledge that everything is unreal. To understand what is or is not, that is wisdom.

It is undoubted that Buddhism, which agrees with Brahmanism in deriving salvation from such knowledge, influenced the Manichæan form of Gnosticism which arose in the 3rd century. And possibly some waves of Buddhist or Brahman speculation were really felt in the Eastern cities of the Roman Empire at an earlier date. Again, it is possible that the earlier Gnosticism, like Manichæism, was influenced by the religion of the Magis, which is preserved



for us in the Zend-Avesta. The fundamental idea of the Magian creed, as of the Gnostic creed, is dualistic. In the beginning there existed two spirits—Ahura Mazda (Ormuzd) and Angra Mainyu (Ahriman). The existence of good and evil is therefore eternal. Both the good and evil spirits possess creative power, the one being the author of light, and good, and truth, the other being the author of darkness, lawlessness, and falsehood.\* The ultimate triumph of the good principle is the essence of this creed, and it is important to notice that the Parsis of India, who retain the Magian religion, have modified it by becoming Monotheists.

In primitive Indo-Iranian times Ahura, or Asura, was conceived of as sevenfold. Then he was divided into seven gods; and in Persia the six “immortal holy beings” who were separated from Ahura received the names of abstractions, such as “good thought,” “holiness,” “piety”—Ahura being regarded as the father of these deified abstractions. A parallel to this process is found in those forms of Gnosticism which personified the attributes in which God manifests Himself. The Magians looked upon the world as a battlefield of the forces of light and darkness. Ahriman counteracts the work of Ormuzd by creating noxious animals and plants, and by causing sin. He does evil out of pure malice, and created the peacock on purpose to show that he could do good if he chose to do it. The duty of man is to work against Ahriman by obeying the law revealed by Ahura Mazda to the prophet Zarathustra (Zoroaster).

It is certain that the religion of Zoroaster attracted much attention among the Greeks. Among others, Plutarch, in the 1st century of the Christian era, shows some acquaintance with Magian belief; in the 5th century Proclus wrote commentaries on some works of Zoroaster; and in the 2nd century Prodicus, the Gnostic, claimed to possess “secret

---

\* See the Introduction to the *Zend-Avesta* in *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. iv.

books of Zoroaster."\* Even if some of this Zoroastrian literature was forged, we may be sure that it was produced amid surroundings where any genuine Magian teaching would have been eagerly welcomed.

The dualistic character of Gnosticism is immediately seen when we study the main Articles of the Gnostic creed as it existed in the 2nd century. These Articles are as follows :—

1. The supreme God is distinct from the Creator of the world, and the work of redemption is in opposition to the work of creation.
2. The God of the Old Testament is identical with the Creator, and the Old Testament is consequently to be rejected.
3. Matter is eternal, and necessarily evil in consequence of a physical power within it.
4. The present material world is the result of a rebellion against God.
5. Matter being evil, Jesus Christ must be less than true God and true man in one Person, otherwise God and evil would be united.

These tenets form the answer to two great problems which the Gnostics faced, and which, in some form or other, will always exercise the human mind: (a) the problem of creation; how can an infinite spiritual Being be the Creator of matter? (b) the problem of the existence of evil; how can a divine power be credited with permitting sin? and how can deliverance from sin be attained?† The problems were approached under the guidance of a prejudice which corrupts almost the whole of Indian thought—the idea that an escape from matter will prove to be an escape from evil.

Our chief authorities for the character of early Gnosticism are St Irenaeus, who wrote about A.D. 185, and apparently incorporated into his book *Against Heresies* a work written a few years earlier; Tertullian, who wrote about A.D. 200; St Hippolytus, who wrote, about A.D. 200, a *Compendium Against all Heresies*, which has been partly restored from

---

\* Clem. Alex., *Strom.* i. 15. 69; cf. Plin., *Hist. Nat.* xxx. 1, 2.

† Tert., *Adv. Marc.* i. 2; Clem., *Strom.* iv. 12. 84.

citations in later writers, and the treatise called *Philosophoumena*, which is now generally attributed to St Hippolytus, but which is probably by another writer. The *Philosophoumena* contains many quotations, notably from the books of the Gnostic Basilides, and a work attributed to Simon Magus. Clement of Alexandria and Origen have also preserved important facts about Gnosticism.

Gnosticism was at the height of its popularity between the years 120 and 150, in the time of Hadrian and Antoninus, and therefore, since we have lost the book which St Justin Martyr wrote against heresies, we have to rely upon evidence which is removed by several years from the teaching that it describes. There are, however, certain Gnostic works and fragments still in existence which will be described presently.

We have no reason to doubt the statements of Justin and Irenaeus, who give a capital importance to Simon Magus in the founding of Gnosticism. That Samaria, the ancient home of undenominationalism, should have been the starting point of such a syncretism of religions is highly probable. At the same time, we must recollect that the whole religious atmosphere of the Roman Empire was favourable to such a growth of thought, and that the conditions necessary for the production of Gnosticism were widely prevalent. There was a desire for a religion which could claim to be a religion of union rather than a religion of separation, and the impression produced by Christ, within a few years of His Passion, made it natural to attach such a religion more or less closely to His name.

It is difficult to decide whether Gnosticism is directly rebuked in the New Testament, except in the case of the Nicolaitans, who are mentioned in the *Apocalypse*. It has been said by eminent scholars that St Paul, in his Pastoral Epistles, and in his *Epistle to the Colossians*, is criticising a rudimentary form of Gnosticism, and by others that he is only contending against a Judaising Christianity. St Paul

denounces the enforced observance of Jewish festivals, the "traditions of men," an exaggerated asceticism which cries out "touch not, taste not, handle not," a love of "endless genealogies" and "the knowledge (*gnosis*) which is falsely so called." Such rebukes would be well fitted for a Judaism which might be introducing itself to a Greek population under catchwords which Greek culture had made popular. Even the worship of angels, and the dualistic dislike of matter, have their counterpart in the superstitions of the Jewish Pharisees and Essenes. And although St Paul uses words which were prominent in the Gnosticism of the 2nd century, such as *Pleroma* (the fulness of divine attributes), and *Aeon* (Age), he uses them without any of the shadowy personification which the Gnostics afterwards attached to these words.

It seems most reasonable to conclude that although Gnosticism was "in the air," there was no developed system in the minds of the false teachers who then harassed the Christians of Asia Minor. But they were guilty of mental excesses which prepared them to become the victims of Gnosticism proper.

Any geographical or chronological classification of the various forms of Gnosticism is more or less misleading. Several of these various systems were contemporary with one another, and many Greeks and Romans of this period were more attracted than repelled by the Semitic elements which were prominent in certain Gnostic schools of thought. And although the Gnostics occasionally quarrelled among themselves, their theological books passed from one school to another, and they found a consoling bond of union in their common hatred of the Church. The schism of the heretics was, as Tertullian acutely remarked, an actual unity.

But, although Gnostic opinions were both ubiquitous and shifting, there are sufficient grounds for drawing some distinction between early and developed Gnosticism, and also between the Gnosticism of Syria and that of Egypt.

The chief representatives of early Gnosticism were Simon Magus and his pupil Menander. There can be no reasonable doubt that Simon endeavoured to be a rival of Christ, and that he came to teach in Rome. He represented himself as God and the Word of God. The influence of Babylonian thought is apparently shown by his teaching that there was a female principle who shared in the work of creation. This principle he identified with a prostitute named Helen, who accompanied him. In his criticism of the religious value of the Old Testament Simon apparently went far beyond Cerinthus, the opponent of St John, who rejected the sacrificial precepts of the Law, but maintained circumcision and the Sabbath.\* This opposition to Judaism, combined with an endeavour to found a universal religion, won many converts for the Simonian school among the Samaritans and the Greeks.†

The more developed forms of Gnosticism radiate from two centres, Antioch in Syria and Alexandria in Egypt.

The chief representations of Syrian Gnosticism, during the 2nd century, were Saturninus and Cerdo,‡ Bardesanes and Tatian, the latter of whom was a pupil of St Justin Martyr. This school was distinguished by the exaggerated authority which it attributed to the powers of evil. The result of this opinion was shown in many points of doctrine. Cerdo maintained that there were two Gods—the evil God who created the world, and the good God revealed by Christ. Saturninus regarded the God of the Old Testament as good, but inferior to the supreme God. He taught that some men are born wholly destitute of light and wholly dominated by Satan. Cerdo held the Old Testament to be unmitigated mischief, while Saturninus taught that it came partly from God and partly from Satan. Both were united in denying that Christ had a real human body, His body being only a

---

\* Iren., *Adv. Haer.* i. 26 ; Epiph., *Haer.* xxviii.

† Justin, *Apol.* i. 26 ; Origen, *c. Celsum*, i. 57 ; vi. 11.

‡ Iren., *Adv. Haer.* i. 24, 27.

phantom, and in this they were at one with the Alexandrine Gnostics. Consistently with their view of God the Syrian Gnostics sought to destroy all that is sensuous in human nature. Some, like Tatian, tried to escape from the laws of nature by an exaggerated asceticism. Others tried to escape from the same laws by deliberate debauchery, and both in Syria and Egypt revolting orgies were not uncommon.\*

Bardesanes denied the resurrection, believed in a number of minor gods, and held the theory of a divine "Mother," who, in conjunction with "the Father of Life," gave birth to a being called "the Son of the Living." A fine poem composed in Syriac by Bardesanes, or a member of his school, still exists.† Important works of Tatian survive, but we only know the opinions of Saturninus and Cerdo from Catholic inventories of heretical doctrines.

More celebrated than the Syrian school was the school of Alexandria. The great leaders of this school were Basilides, who taught at Alexandria in the time of Hadrian, and Valentinus, who taught at Alexandria, and in Cyprus, and in Rome, in the time of Antoninus Pius. Basilides claimed to be a disciple of Glaucias, the interpreter of St Peter, Valentinus to be a disciple of Theodas, a friend of St Paul. The Valentinians were soon separated into two divisions.‡ The first was the Italian school, of which Ptolemaeus and Heracleon were the chief representatives. The second was the Oriental school led by Theodotus, with whose writings Clement of Alexandria was well acquainted, and by Marcus, who seems to have been the author of a Gnostic liturgy which is quoted by Irenaeus, and was probably known to Tertullian.§ Of the works of Ptolemaeus there remains a letter to a woman named Flora, || and a fragment of a

---

\* In this they were anticipated by the Nicolaitans (*Rev.* ii.; cf. *Clem. Alex., Strom.* ii. 20. 118; iii. 4. 25; *Epiph., Haer.* xxv.). This sect invented a theology as immoral as its conduct.

† "The Hymn of the Soul," in *Texts and Studies*, vol. v.

‡ *Philos.* vi. 35. § *Adv. Val.* 4. || *Epiph., Haer.* xxxiii. 3-7.



commentary on the Prologue of *St John's Gospel*.<sup>\*</sup> Of Heracleon's commentary on *St John* we have some fragments preserved in the commentary of Origen.

The character of Alexandrine Gnosticism is Hellenic, and in touch with later Greek philosophy. Its distinctive peculiarity is to be found in its view of God as an absolute abstraction. The Valentinians taught that from an unknown and indefinable God, the "Abyss," there emanated a gradation of divine powers or aeons. This process was described as a *probole* (putting-forth), such as the production of a web by a spider. Silence, the companion of Abyss, produced Father, and Truth which is the companion of Father. From these four beings next came the Word and Life, and Man and the Church. These eight beings formed the Ogdoad, or union of eight. Together with two other groups of divine beings they formed the Pleroma, or full society of thirty spiritual beings. Sophia, or Wisdom, one of the lowest beings in the Pleroma, was filled with a vain desire to know the mysterious Abyss, and in her struggles produced Achamoth (Hebrew name for wisdom), which is regarded as a female power, who produces the substances from which the world is formed. Valentinus himself said that there was only one Wisdom. Ptolemaeus taught that the aeons were real personalities, but Valentinus seems to have regarded them as thoughts of God,<sup>†</sup> and thereby made the fall from original righteousness begin in God's own mind.

The system of Basilides seems to be most accurately described by Clement and by the author of the *Philosophoumena*. The system described by Irenaeus, and by Hippolytus in his *Compendium Against all Heresies*, is probably a later form of the doctrine of Basilides. It teaches the existence of seven great emanations from God, and a series of 365 lower aeons, at the head of whom are Archons. Magical

---

<sup>\*</sup> Iren., *Adv. Haer.* i. 8.

<sup>†</sup> Tert., *Adv. Val.* 4 ; Clem., *Strom.* ii. 20. 114.



## 226 HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

names are frequently employed, and the highest Archon is called Abraxas, inasmuch as the Greek letters which compose this word are numerically equivalent to 365. But the doctrine described by Clement, and in the *Philosophoumena*, is a Pantheistic system which repudiates the theory of emanations.

The original Deity cannot be said to exist; He is behind all existence—in modern language He is “Unconscious Will.” He willed to create a world-seed, which was the origin of all future growths, containing in itself the germ of all things, as the grown peacock and its feathers may be said to exist within one egg. This seed contained both the material world and the essence of a sonship which was triple, namely subtle, coarse, and impure. The subtle element mounted like a thought to God, the coarse sonship did the same with the help of the Holy Spirit, and the sonship which needed purification remained, and it was necessary that this third sonship should be united with the two others. This was predestined to be effected by the Gospel.

From Adam to Moses reigned a spirit called the great Archon, who came out of the world-seed and created the heavenly sphere. From Moses to Christ reigned a lesser Archon, who created the aerial sphere. These two worlds were known respectively as the Ogdoad and the Hebdomad. The material sphere in which we dwell was without a ruling spirit until a commotion was transmitted from the Ogdoad through the Hebdomad to the third sonship. Light then descended upon Jesus, who shared in this sonship and in elements derived from the higher spheres. At His Resurrection and Ascension He left behind Him certain elements in His complex nature, and took the remainder up to God. It will be the same with all who share in the third sonship, and purify it from all dross according to the teaching of the Gospel.

The Valentinian theory of redemption was very similar.

It was held that there are certain divine sparks in that material substance of which the world is composed. These heavenly sparks constitute the human spirit, and redemption is wrought by a knowledge of Christ, whose appearance in this mixed world delivers the spiritual element in us from the power of matter.

Some men are from the beginning destitute of any spiritual element, and are therefore incapable of redemption; they perish like the beasts. The Valentinians admitted that ordinary Christians were better than the heathen, and said that they occupied a middle position between the "spiritual" who would be saved, do what they might, and the "material," who would be damned, do what they would. The middle class were "psychic," called, as Theodotus said, but not elect; feminine souls to whom faith is granted, but not knowledge. Theodotus said that they would be cleansed by fire, and then rise through the "three mansions," or stages of discipline, to the Ogdoad. The "spiritual" will soar to the Ogdoad immediately after death. The soul will need no body in a future state. By granting that others would in time be saved, and by not absolutely separating from the worship of the Church, the Valentinians were able to propagate their opinions with great success. The usual plan was for them to found little philosophic unions within the Church, and to complain when those whom they despised as "Catholics," or "Churchmen"\* suspiciously avoided them.

With Alexandria we must also connect some smaller Gnostic groups, such as the Ophites, who worshipped the Serpent for outwitting the Creator of the world, and the more important sect founded by Carpocrates. He was probably a junior contemporary of Valentinus. Some writings of his sect were known to Clement and Irenaeus, and the latter tells us that about 160, a woman named Marcellina

---

\* Iren., *Adv. Haer.* iii. 15.

## 228 HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

preached the doctrine of Carpocrates at Rome with some success.\*

The Egyptian Gnostics became hopelessly divided, but remnants of their sects still existed in the time of Epiphanius. Their literature was very large, including forged Gospels, Acts, and Apocalypses. Among them was a *Gospel of Matthias*, *Acts of Judas*, an *Assumption of Paul*, and an *Apocalypse of Abraham*. Several of these forgeries passed into Catholic circles after some revision. Among them was the *Gospel of Thomas*, or "Gospel of the Infancy," and a *Journey of John*. Among purely Gnostic books is the *Pistis Sophia*, which still exists, and was probably written in Egypt in the second half of the 3rd century. The main theme of the book is Christ revealing to His disciples how Pistis Sophia, one of the twenty-four emanations, lost her place in heaven by a misguided search after the light, and how she was rescued.

Of the ability of the great Gnostics there has never been any question. They threatened to absorb all that was most modern and most intellectual in Christendom. Heracleon was remarkable for his expositions of theology; Ptolemaeus for his criticism of the Old Testament; Valentinus for his vigour and imagination. The Valentinians became, Tertullian says,† "the most popular combination among the heretics." But under the success of the Gnostics we can detect the secret of their ultimate failure.

The Gnostics claimed to teach original Christianity. They appealed to pretended Apostolic traditions. But the Church appealed to the consent of the various local Churches, and to the bishops whose predecessors had been appointed by apostles. When the Gnostics appealed to forged writings ascribed to the apostles, the Church drew up a list or Canon of genuine apostolic writings.

The Gnostics posed as progressive. But the Gnostic

---

\* Iren., *Adv. Haer.* i. 25.

† *Adv. Val.* 1.

Christ only restored man's spirit to its original state; the Catholic Christ offers to man an infinite progress through union with the divine nature.

The Gnostics claimed to teach an absolute and universal religion. But they depreciated the value of Judaism in the history of religion, and confined salvation to an intellectual circle. On the other hand, the Church recognised development in religion, maintained the unity and equality of the human race, and laid stress upon the public and open character of Catholic tradition.

The Gnostics identified ethical problems with problems concerning the nature of the universe. But in doing this, they adopted a pessimistic attitude. They asserted that matter is inherently sinful, and denied the freedom of the human will. The Church asserted the freedom of the human will, declared that the physical world could be hallowed, and that it had been hallowed by Christ becoming "what we are ourselves."

Between Gnosticism proper and Catholicism, we must place the system of *Marcion*. He was a native of Pontus,\* who came to Rome about 139, was influenced by the Syrian Gnostic, Cerdo, left the Church about 144, and won an immense number of converts. He differed from the Gnostics in the following points: (1) He was interested in redemption rather than speculation, and laid stress on faith rather than on knowledge; (2) He made no distinction between an esoteric form of religion and a religion for the masses; he therefore founded an organised Church, and not a philosophic school; (3) He explained the Old Testament literally, and not allegorically.

But he differed from the Catholics more sharply than he differed from the Gnostics. (*a*) He declared Christ's human body to be a "phantom." He said that the Son of God was not born, but assumed the appearance of a full-grown

---

\* Justin, *Apol.* i. 26, 58.

body. (b) He taught that the God of love revealed in Christ is different from the subordinate God who created the world, and who is a God of stern justice and anger. (c) He rejected the Old Testament as the work of the subordinate God, and rejected every part of the New Testament which appeared to him to be out of harmony with the teaching of St Paul.

The Fathers of the Church rightly recognised in Marcion a most formidable opponent of Christianity. The severe asceticism of his life disarmed the objections that might be felt against the antinomian elements in his theology. He posed as a reformer, and was regarded by his followers as an apostle. It is worth noticing that, in his self-imagined fidelity to St Paul, he was prophetic of Luther, and that he anticipated some successors of Luther in his readiness to mutilate even the Epistles of St Paul when he realised that they did not favour his views as to the relations between Judaism and Christianity. He expounded these views in an important work called the *Antitheses*,\* *i.e.* the antagonisms of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Marcion repented of his heresy and sought to be re-admitted to the Church. The terms imposed upon him were that he should bring back the souls whom he had perverted. He died before he was able to perform this penance,† and the Marcionites were still numerous in the 4th century.‡

## § 2. *The Influence of the Gnostics upon the Church.*

It is now a popular theory that Gnosticism penetrated, and in some respects created, Catholicism. A little truth underlies this theory. Gnosticism was an essentially Greek movement, and even when it was apparently Oriental, its Oriental elements had already passed through Hellenism.

---

\* Tert., *Adv. Marc.* i. 19.

† Tert., *De Praescr.* 30.

‡ Epiph., *Haer.* xlii. 1.

It was a Greek spirit which endeavoured to appropriate Christianity, while the Catholicism of men like Justin and Athanasius was a creed which claimed that all true Greek thought was Christian. And as Gnosticism endeavoured to be Greek and cosmopolitan, it endeavoured to excel and to anticipate the development of Church theology. It was, in fact, a mock Catholicism.

One of the chief arguments which is employed to prove that the faith of the early Church became transmuted by Gnostic influence is the assertion that the interpretation of God, as the highest moral Being, was corrupted by the use of Greek metaphysical terms. Now, it is true that in her doctrine of the Trinity, the Church adopted some phrases used by the Gnostics. The word *ousia*, which signifies the spiritual substance of the Three Persons, was used by the Gnostics; the word *hypostasis*, which the Church used to describe the real nature of the Godhead, and afterwards the real subsistence of each of the Three Persons, was also used by the Gnostics, but had been previously employed in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*; the word *homo-ousios*, adopted by the Council of Nicaea, in A.D. 325, to assert that the Son is of the same *ousia* as the Father, had been used by the Valentinians to assert that the spiritual existence produced by Achamoth was one in kind with herself.\*

But such words were the common property of the educated Greek world. They were used long before Gnosticism began, and the modern writers who point to them as an instance of Hellenism superseding Christianity forget how Christianity recast the meaning of these words. They forsake the centre of the problem for its circumference whenever they fail to realise that Christianity influenced Greek thought far more than Greek thought influenced Christian theology. To call the Gnostics "the earliest theologians," † as Harnack calls them, really requires us to

---

\* Iren., *Adv. Haer.* i. 5.

† *Dogmengesch.* vol. i. p. 248 (vol. i. p. 259).

construct an imaginary development of Christian thought such as might have taken place without the New Testament and the writers of the sub-apostolic age. No one who acknowledges the authenticity of St Paul's *Epistles to the Philippians*, *Colossians*, and *Ephesians* can reasonably call the Gnostics the earliest theologians. Their only claim to such a title is the fact that they tried to smother Christianity with the antagonistic elements of a metaphysical system. From this system the Fathers of the Church slowly, and not without individual mistakes, selected such elements as enabled the Christian to accept, as an intellectual conviction, what he had first accepted as a spiritual revelation.

This has been well stated by Dr Hatch in his popular Hibbert lectures on the *Influence of Greek Ideas upon the Church*. But his book needs to be strictly questioned. It exaggerates that influence. The book can only be defended on the ground that it deals with ideas "outside and after the New Testament,"\* and therefore can safely set aside the theology of the apostles. But such a defence assumes that when Christian doctrine developed in harmony with Greek thought, this development did not begin before the New Testament "but without it." The assumption is transparently false, for this development of doctrine began both before the books which we include in our New Testament and through these books. It began as soon as there were intelligent Christians who spoke Greek.

It is true that the Gnostics were probably the first commentators on the New Testament. The reason is obvious. In the plural word "aeons" used by St Paul, Valentinus found a mention of the stairway of emanations which led from the world to God. In the husband (who was not a husband) of the Samaritan woman, Heracleon discovered her guardian angel. If the New Testament contains such astounding secrets as these, each piece of it must be manipu-

---

\* A. M. Fairbairn, *Contemporary Review* (March 1897).



lated with great artistic care; and so Irenaeus,\* with delightful humour, compares the Gnostic allegorical process of interpreting Scripture with the process of changing the mosaic picture of a king into the mosaic picture of a fox, and the poems of Homer into the poems of any other poet. Now, an allegorical method of interpretation may find considerable support in the history of orthodox religion. St Paul spoke of Hagar and Sarah as types of Judaism and Christianity, and every imaginative mind will find analogies between spiritual things and the more tangible realities of existence. But there are great variations in the use of allegory. It is possible to use a secondary explanation as an illustration of Christian truth, or it is possible to use it against Christian truth. The latter was the method of the Gnostics. For instance, they interpreted the raising of Jairus's daughter as a type of Achamoth, the mother of the Demiurge, being led to a perception of the light. Here we have a thoroughly pagan conception read into a Gospel story. And we can frankly admit that the Jew, Philo, had prepared the way for such interpretations when, for instance, he represented Melchizedek as the power of rational persuasion offering to the soul the food of gladness, and that Origen could not have clearly distinguished his own method from that of the Valentinians. He would have said, as they would, that an enlightened conscience is disturbed by many passages in the Bible, and that we must therefore believe that these passages were never meant to have a literal meaning. But even Origen, whose allegorism is far in excess of the allegorism of his Catholic successors, was endeavouring to be loyal to Christ, to reach "the mystery of the King." Without defending all his interpretations, and without saying that bad allegorism is justifiable when it is used for a good end, we must refuse to put Gnostic and Catholic allegorism on the same level. For the right

---

\* *Adv. Haer.* i. 8, 9.

explanation of the ancient Hebrew habit of attributing passions to the Most High was absolutely excluded by the allegorism of the Gnostics, for the simple reason that they did not believe that one God had ruled and gradually developed the thought of mankind. But the right explanation was not excluded in the same degree by the allegorism of the Catholics, which began before Gnostic allegorism, and would have inevitably flourished apart from Gnosticism.

If Catholicism owes little to the Gnostic allegorising of Scripture, it owes still less to the Gnostic conception of Christ. Yet Prof. Harnack has ingeniously urged, that before the time of Irenaeus none but the Gnostics "taught that Jesus Christ had two natures, and ascribed to them particular actions and experiences." \* He represents this doctrine as derived from the Gnostics by Tertullian, and shows that the teaching of Tertullian on this important point was repeated in the 5th century at the Council of Chalcedon. † He thus obliquely accuses the entire Catholic Church of borrowing a fundamental doctrine from the Gnostics.

Irenaeus, no less than Tertullian, is accused by Harnack of separating the two natures of Christ in the manner which appeared to him so reprehensible in the case of the Gnostics. ‡ Irenaeus is therefore charged with "unfolding a speculation according to which the predicates applying to the human nature of Jesus do not also hold good of His Divinity," § and the saint is "damned with faint praise" for rescuing "the minimum" of Christ's humanity when he lays stress upon the distinction between the two natures of Christ.

All this criticism of Irenaeus is quite beside the mark. When he refrains from saying that everything which is true

\* *Dogmengesch.* vol. i. p. 560 (vol. ii. p. 286).

† *Op. cit.* vol. i. p. 555 (vol. ii. p. 281).

‡ *Op. cit.* vol. i. p. 559 (vol. ii. p. 285).

§ *Op. cit.* vol. i. p. 554 (vol. ii. p. 279).

with regard to one nature of Christ, is equally true with regard to the other, he is not inventing a new theory. He is only retaining the theology of St Paul, who plainly distinguished "the form of God," which eternally belonged to Christ, from "the form of a slave" in which Christ suffered.\* And we can safely assert that if there is a writer who values the reality of Christ's human nature and experience, and teaches that there is an intimate union of the human and the divine in Christ, that writer is Irenaeus. Otherwise he would not only have been untrue to the evangelical traditions which he inherited, but he would have been making an unconditional surrender into the hands of his Gnostic enemies.

Superficially the doctrine of Irenaeus, of Tertullian, and of the Council of Chalcedon resembles Gnosticism by teaching that Christ has two natures. But the difference is profound. The Gnostics absolutely denied the union of two real natures in the one divine Person of Jesus Christ. They sharply distinguished the human "Jesus" from the celestial aeon "Christ" who descended upon "Jesus." They also represented the manhood as a mist, a temporary shroud around the heavenly Christ, and although their more popular writings applied to Christ expressions which seem to identify Him with God, their serious theology utterly repudiated His Divinity. Their rejection of the Catholic doctrine of Christ's Person logically followed from their rejection of the Catholic doctrine of God and of the world. Men who believe that matter is evil cannot believe that true God took a material body. And the Gnostics would certainly have opposed the Catholic doctrine of the 5th century as bitterly as they opposed the Catholic doctrine of the 2nd century.

Worship is theology in practice, and the legacy of the early Christian centuries to our own has been largely a

---

\* *Phil.* ii. 6.

legacy of worship. And it is probable that Rationalism and semi-Rationalism have never been more confident than in their statements that "the whole conception of Christian worship was changed" through the influence of the Greek and Gnostic mysteries.\* It is urged that this can be clearly proved in regard to Christian baptismal services. We must admit that the facts which support this charge can be marshalled in a very convincing manner. By ignoring the extent to which Hellenism enters into the New Testament, and by omitting to notice how many customs are dictated by convenience, or prompted by natural feelings of devotion, a lucid writer can make the parallel between Christian and Hellenic worship seem positively startling.

It will, therefore, be well for me to state the facts with some minuteness.

(1) It became usual for Christians to apply almost the whole terminology of the pagan "mysteries" to Christianity, and as the Gnostics are known to have had their mysteries, M. Renan says: "It is by Gnosticism that Christianity first announced itself as a new religion, destined to endure, having a worship and sacraments, and capable of producing an art. It is by Gnosticism that the Church united itself with the ancient mysteries, and appropriated the elements in them which satisfied the people."† In Egypt, and at Eleusis and elsewhere, it was customary for the pagans to celebrate dramatic performances which told the story of the resurrection of Osiris, or that of Mithra, of the mourning of Demeter or the adventures of Dionysus. Now, Clement of Alexandria, who speaks of the torchlight processions at Eleusis, poetically says of Christian worship: "O truly sacred mysteries! O stainless light! My way is lighted with torches, and I survey the heavens and God; I am become holy whilst I am initiated. The Lord is the hierophant, and seals while illuminating him who is

---

\* Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 309.

† *L'Église Chrétienne*, p. 155.

initiated.”\* And similar language became common among Christians. But long before Clement wrote these words, Ignatius used the word “mysteries” in a manner which easily explains the two senses which became common among later Christian writers. Ignatius speaks of the central truths of Christianity as “mysteries of proclamation,” † and calls the Ephesians “fellow-mystics with Paul,” ‡ and he also calls the deacons “deacons of the mysteries of Jesus Christ.”§ It is difficult to imagine that the last passage does not include some reference to Christian worship. And so the later Catholic writers continually employ the word “mysteries” to signify sacraments on the one hand or theology on the other, inasmuch as these things are not fitly handled by those who are not Christians. Clement’s language was by no means free from fanciful exaggeration, but he made a vigorous attempt to rescue beautiful words for true religion. In this he was following the example of the New Testament; for St Paul speaks without hesitation of Christian “mysteries,” St Peter|| describes a penetrating insight into a good character by the word used to describe the last stage of pagan initiation, and the word “perfect,” which occurs so frequently in the Epistles, was used by pagans to signify the initiated, and in the Septuagint to describe whatever is religiously complete. ¶

(2) The ritual of baptism became long and elaborate, differing in many particulars from the simple service described and commanded in the New Testament. A comparison of the baptismal rites of different countries shows us a unity in diversity which immediately suggests that their origin is very primitive. After the candidates had been admitted to the catechumenate, they were, in the 4th century, and in later centuries, carefully instructed in the Christian faith during Lent. A peculiar feature of the Latin rite used

---

\* *Protrept.* 12.

† *Ad. Eph.* xix.

‡ *Ibid.* xii.

§ *Ad. Trall.* ii.

|| 1 *St Pet.* ii. 12.

¶ So Athenasius calls the baptised “the perfected,” *c. Ar.* i. 34.

in Rome and Africa is the giving of salt to the catechumen, to be received in token of that savour of wisdom which befits the Christian character. In Spain, and probably in Gaul and Britain, the candidates were anointed with oil when they were admitted to the catechumenate. This preliminary existed everywhere, but was generally postponed until the day of baptism. The instruction given to the candidates was instruction in the Creed, to which was added at Rome the Lord's Prayer and readings from the four Gospels, which were placed for this purpose at the four corners of the altar. In Byzantine times the Nicene Creed was used, and the mixed character of the population at Rome made it necessary for the Creed to be said both in Greek and Latin.

The rites of the actual baptism took place on Easter Eve, and included : \*

(a) An unction with oil on the body. The candidates, being about to forsake Satan, were anointed like athletes before a combat. The lips and ears were then touched with oil, at Rome with saliva, as Christ had touched the deaf and dumb that he might hear and speak.

(b) A triple renunciation of Satan, or repudiation of paganism. In all except the Gallican countries this renunciation was followed by a repetition of the Creed said by the candidates, who turned towards the East.

(c) A very brief threefold confession of faith was made, and then the candidates stepped into the font, and were thrice immersed in the water. The immersion was not total, the water not being sufficiently deep, and water was poured on the head of the candidate. In Spain there was only a single immersion.

(d) Confirmation. The baptised were anointed on the head with perfumed oil, and received the laying-on of hands. At Rome and Milan this rite included a prayer for the seven gifts of the Spirit. In Gaul and North Italy the bishop

---

\* The rites are fully described by Duchesne, *Origines du Culte Chrétien*, p. 281 ff. (2nd edit.).

washed the feet of the baptised before he laid his hands upon them.

(e) Mass said by the bishop, communion given to the newly baptised. At Rome they received a draught of water, milk, and honey after communion.

Now, a little consideration of these ceremonies does not at all lead to the conclusion that they were of Gnostic, and originally of pagan, origin. On the contrary, they are obviously inspired by the motive of impressing upon the neophyte the momentous change through which he is passing when he repudiates paganism. And for this purpose he is made to take part in a number of ceremonies which are either directly mentioned in the New Testament, or are ceremonies which translate the Biblical descriptions of a new life. Of the former class are such ceremonies as that of breathing upon the candidate, and the touching of his lips and ears.\* Of the latter class are such ceremonies as the anointing with oil † and the draught of milk and honey.‡ The custom of requiring a long course of instruction before baptism is easily accounted for, when we recollect how religion and morals had become corrupted in the cities of the Roman Empire. And the custom of baptising on Easter Eve, rather than at any other time, would be very natural in any quarter where St Paul's Epistles were read, and his analogy between the resurrection and baptism was valued.

But there is another reason for believing that these customs began in the Church and not in the sects. It is the early date at which they were used. This early date is suggested by their prevalence in widely distant countries, and by their unity amid widely varying details, and it is proved by the statements of Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Irenaeus. Tertullian shows that in his day baptism was

---

\* See *St John* xx. 22 ; *St Mark* vii. 33.

† See 1 *St John* ii. 27.

‡ See *Joel* iii. 18 ; *Ps.* lxxxi. 16 : *Exodus* xxxiii. 3. *The Epistle of Barnabas* vi. expressly interprets the last verse as a prophecy of the food of the children of the Church.



administered by the bishops, and generally at Easter. He mentions the renunciation of Satan, the baptism in the name of the Trinity, the unction and signing of the members of the body, the laying-on of hands, the communion of the body and blood of Christ, and the draught of milk and honey. The ritual of baptism was therefore substantially the same in A.D. 200 as in A.D. 350, and is far anterior to the influx of the world into the Church. Moreover, he speaks of these rites as long accepted and hallowed by "the patronage of custom." \* They were evidently not new in his time, and he points out that they were in use among the Marcionites. The Valentinians, who were far more pagan in tendency than the Marcionites, attached great importance to the rite of anointing.† As the Marcionites forsook the Church in A.D. 144, and kept aloof from it with intense antagonism, it is difficult to conceive that these rites were adopted by the Church from the Marcionites or any other sect. They must be earlier than the Marcionite secession. And the language used by Barnabas makes it credible that the draught of milk and honey after baptism dates from the 1st century.‡

It is true that there are affinities between these ceremonies and contemporary pagan customs. The neophytes of Mithra had to undergo a long preparation, so severe that they sometimes died before they were initiated. In one of their services the throats of the worshippers were anointed. In some mysteries a pass-word was required—a *symbolum*—and the Christians called their Creed, too, a *symbolum*. At Eleusis there was a sacred draught and a sacred cake. There was a torchlight procession, and the initiated wore crowns, even as the baptised were sometimes crowned with garlands, or as those were crowned who took part in the processions of Corpus Christi Day in France of the old *régime*. And

---

\* *De Cor.* 3; cf. *Adv. Marc.* i. 14.

† *Iren., Adv. Haer.* i. 21.

‡ The oldest definite references to this rite are in *Tert., de Cor.* 3; *Adv. Marc.* i. 14; *Clement, Paedagog.* i. 6; *Canons of Hippolytus*, §§ 144, 148; in *Duchesne, Origines du Culte Chrétien* (2nd edit.).

we may remark that the ancient Romans,\* like our modern Irish peasantry, used saliva to avert bad luck. But these affinities are not sufficient to support the contention that the worship of the Greek mysteries filtered through Mithraism and then through Gnosticism and finally rested in Catholic Christianity. I readily admit that a lower form of religion has sometimes exercised a pernicious influence upon a higher. We have a striking instance of this in the influence exercised upon the Aryan inhabitants of Bengal by aborigines who worship devils and offer human sacrifices, but in such cases there is nothing of that profound difference which separated Gnostic from Catholic conceptions. We are familiar with the saying that poets see resemblances and philosophers see differences. The title of philosopher we cannot give to M. Renan, Dr Hatch, and Prof. Harnack for their discussion of Gnostic influence upon the Church. And this is not the place to discuss their claims to the name of poet.

The victory of Catholic Christianity over Gnosticism is one of the most miraculous facts in history. It was a victory gained over a system which not only appeared to be keeping pace with the culture of the time, but also appeared to keep the kernel of antecedent systems while throwing aside the husks. Gnosticism offered something to the rationalist and something to the mystic, and it could disguise an Agnostic view of God under a picturesque ritual and a nominal adherence to orthodox statements. We can now recognise that any compromise with Gnosticism would have meant for the Church quick success and headlong failure.

---

\* Persius, *Sat.* ii. 33.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE CHURCH AND THE GOSPELS.

#### § 1. *At the End of the 2nd Century.*

WHAT is the meaning of the fact that certain biographies of Christ were selected by the Church out of a number of more or less complete biographies which are known to have been circulated, and that these selected biographies have been exclusively honoured as canonical?

The fact means that at a certain early period Catholic Christians treated these books in a manner different from their treatment of other works. And the reason why they accorded to these writings a preference over others, was their conviction that the origin and trustworthiness of these books are superior to the origin and trustworthiness of others. There are, in fact, very strong grounds for believing that after the death of the apostles few authentic sayings of Christ and few important facts of His earthly life were preserved which have not a place in our four canonical Gospels. Dr A. Resch \* has collected from early writers a list of seventy-five sayings attributed to Jesus, and which he thinks may be genuine. The author's method is not very critical, and the list may very easily be reduced to twenty. The sayings of the Lord inscribed on the 3rd century fragment discovered at Oxyrhynchus † have added eight others, four of which have clear parallels in our Gospels. The character

---

\* *Agrapha*, in Gebhardt u. Harnack, *Texte u. Unters.* v.

† Grenfell and Hunt, *Sayings of our Lord* (1897).

of most of the reputed sayings, or "Logia," encourages us to doubt their genuineness. Their spiritual inferiority to the teaching of the New Testament is generally as marked as the inferiority of statements made by minor schoolmen to statements made by Athanasius or Augustine.

The trustworthiness of a book depends so much upon the opportunities enjoyed by the author, that the Church, during the 2nd century, determined only to admit into the New Testament those writings which were really apostolic, or had been so long used in public worship, and so unanimously admitted by the tradition of the elders to be in accordance with the mind of the apostles, that to reject them would have been absurd. The *Epistle to the Hebrews* does not contain the name of an apostolic author as the *Epistle to the Romans* does, and no author's name is in any way stated or suggested in the *Gospel of St Mark*. But they both were thought worthy of a place in the New Testament. *Acts*, together with Epistles by Peter, James, and other apostles, combined with the Gospels and the Epistles of Paul to give the Christian reader a harmonious collection of apostolic doctrine. A close and careful sifting was made of the numerous books which were in circulation. This sifting process was continuous, and began at a very early date. It was rendered imperatively necessary by the attempt of the Gnostics and other heretics to create a tradition and Canon of their own. More particularly was it necessary in order to oppose the teaching of Marcion, who admitted only the authority of one apostle, Paul, and of one Gospel, that of Luke, the companion of Paul. It is probable that the Churches of Rome and Asia Minor, which held an unbroken tradition from apostolic days, and were conspicuous for their orthodoxy, took the leading part in compiling our New Testament of apostolic writings.

The word "Canon," in the sense of the full collection of New Testament writings, cannot be proved to have been used before the 4th century, but it may perhaps bear this mean-

ing in Origen. The name "New Testament," in the sense of this collection of writings, first occurs in Tertullian, and is implied in Melito near the end of the 2nd century.\* For it is not until the latter part of this century that we find positive and unmistakable evidence to show that the fourfold Gospel was fixed, and that the writings of the New Testament were placed upon the same level of authority as those of the Old Testament. About A.D. 181 Theophilus of Antioch describes writers of the New Testament as "bearers of the Spirit."† Irenaeus says the Gospel is fourfold, "but held together by one Spirit,"‡ and Serapion of Antioch identifies the authority of an apostle with that of Christ. When Melito made a journey to the East to discover exactly the number and order of the "books of the Old Testament," it is plain that a similar collection existed of books of the New Testament. This inspired New Testament contained our four Gospels, and four only. Irenaeus regards the number four as peculiarly and necessarily appropriate, and they are placed in a unique position by Clement of Alexandria. We ought, however, to bear in mind that whereas the Canon of the Gospels was definitely fixed before the year 200, the Canon of the entire New Testament varied considerably in different parts of Christendom, and was not practically fixed even among Catholic communities until about A.D. 400.

Are we then to suppose that the idea of a fourfold Canon of the Gospels is a sudden creation, and that even in Asia Minor, with its strongly Catholic feeling, "about 160, the whole of our four Gospels had not been definitely recognised"?§

The question is of extreme interest. For if the Catholics, about 175, suddenly determined to select four Gospels out of a number of other Gospels because these four were best

\* Eus., *H. E.* iv. 26.

† *Ad Autol.* ii. 22.

‡ *Adv. Haer.* iii. 11. 8.

§ Harnack, *Dogmengesch.* vol. i. p. 341 (vol. ii. p. 42).

fitted for opposing the prophecies of the Montanists and the speculations of the Gnostics, it might fairly be urged that our Gospels are not entitled to much more credit than the apocryphal Gospels which they ousted. And, in fact, the writers who believe in this late and sudden creation of the Canon do regard large parts of our Gospels as apocryphal, and assert that they distort the attitude of the first Christians towards Christ.

I believe that there is abundant evidence from the time of St Clement of Rome onwards not only to show that the devotion to the Person of Christ which inspires our four Gospels was a devotion which had continuously inspired the Church, but also that from the same period the conception which resulted in the formation of the New Testament Canon was at work. With regard to our four Gospels in particular, we can discover no breath of reasonable suspicion against them, and we can discover much that suggests to us that these Gospels were regarded as superior to all others in the first quarter of the 2nd century, when men who remembered the apostles were still alive.

It will be best for us to begin with some references to writings composed after the middle of the 2nd century, which manifestly express what was the general opinion of the Church, and not merely the fresh and private opinion of the writers.

In 1740 there was published a manuscript discovered by Muratori in the Ambrosian Library at Milan. The manuscript is of the 8th or 9th century, written anonymously and mutilated.\* The language is barbaric Latin, and the date of the original was probably about 180. This fragment comprises the oldest extant list of the books of the New Testament. It describes the chief facts of our Lord's life as declared in the Gospels by "one sovereign Spirit." The existence of only four Gospels is implied; the author of the

---

\* The Muratorian fragment is well printed in Gwatkin, *Selections from Early Christian Writers*.

"third book of the Gospel" is expressly said to be Luke, the physician, instructed by Paul, and the fourth Gospel is attributed to John. These two latter Gospels are also quoted in the letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons written in 177, and connected with the history of Irenaeus.

In 177, at the end of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, near the time of the annual festival which brought together, on the 1st of August, the delegates from the three Gaulish provinces to meet at the altar of Rome and Augustus, the population of Lyons attacked the Christians of Lyons and Vienne. Thanks to a letter sent by the Churches of those towns to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia, we know how these Christians suffered. The imperial legate was instructed by Marcus Aurelius to inflict capital punishment on those who declared themselves to be Christians. Some, being Roman citizens, were decapitated; others were thrown to the beasts. Forty-eight names of martyrs have been preserved; among them was Pothinus, bishop of Lyons, who died in prison from the kicks and blows of the pagan mob. Irenaeus was elected his successor. He was a native of Asia Minor, had lived in Smyrna, and was a pupil of Polycarp, who died in 155.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of his evidence, and no attempt to depreciate it has met with even moderate success. He was not only a diligent bishop and an intelligent writer, he was also exceptionally well informed. He had stayed for some time in Rome, and thus was acquainted with the Christianity of three different countries. He was skilled in the controversies of the time, prominently opposing both Gnosticism and Marcionism. More than this, he was connected with the apostolic age by two direct personal links, and possibly by more. He was a presbyter in the Church ruled by Pothinus, who was over ninety when he died, and who probably came to Gaul from Asia Minor. Irenaeus was therefore in continual intercourse with a man who was born some ten years before St John's



death; and he had not only received traditions from "elders" who had known the apostles and friends of the apostles, but he also remembered Polycarp so well that he says: "I can describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and his goings-out and his comings-in, and his manner of life, and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words." \*

I can no more persuade myself that Irenaeus was capable of giving a fictitious account of the habits and teaching of St Polycarp than I can persuade myself that it will be possible for me, while I retain my mental faculties, to give a fictitious account of the habits and teaching of my revered friend and instructor, Dr Liddon.

Now, Irenaeus uses and quotes the four Gospels as a modern orthodox theologian might use and quote them. He gives to these four Gospels a special veneration, and he lays the strongest emphasis on the continuity of Church doctrine. He expressly assumes that his opinion of the Gospels is not a private opinion, but represents the mind of the truly apostolic Churches. He alleges that the Ebionites, Marcionites, Docetae, and Valentinians, respectively claim that the

---

\* Eus., *H. E.* v. 20. The attempt which has been recently made by Harnack (*Chronologie der Altchristlichen Litteratur*, B. i. pp. 328, 657) to set aside the evidence of Irenaeus to the fourth Gospel is really a fresh tribute to the force of the words of Irenaeus. The more important points urged by Harnack are, that Irenaeus says that he was with Polycarp "when still a boy"; that Irenaeus did not hear Polycarp after he grew to manhood; that Polycarp was probably only a disciple of "John the presbyter"; and that the boy Irenaeus confused this John with the apostle. We may briefly remark (1) that Irenaeus distinctly says that he remembers the incidents of that time better than events of recent occurrence; (2) that Polycarp died when Irenaeus was probably about twenty-five, and his friends would have readily corrected him if necessary; (3) that Polycarp was born about 69, and might easily have known St John. There is no great difficulty in thinking that the apostle was as aged as Cardinal Newman, or Bishop Durnford of Chichester, and that his mind was equally active.

*Gospels of Matthew, Luke, Mark and John* support their own peculiar tenets.\* And he declares this claim to be false, and shows that it sometimes necessitates a mutilation of the Gospels. His testimony must be considered to prove that in 185, and at least several years before 185, the Churches of Rome, Asia Minor, and Gaul, held that our four Gospels were written by the evangelists whose names they bear. That Irenaeus, in studying the New Testament, was accustomed to turn to account the exceptional evidence which was in his possession is an indisputable fact. In discussing the number of the beast, in *Revelation* xiii. 18, he shows that some manuscripts read 616 and others 666. He decides in favour of the latter, says it is found "in all good and ancient copies," † and was attested by "those who had seen John face to face."

This is a proof of the fact that Irenaeus was a man competent to give evidence in matters which concern the criticism of the New Testament. The attempt has been made to discredit his evidence, because he gives fanciful reasons for the existence of four authoritative stories of our Lord's life, and no more than four. We might just as well attempt to explain away the historical statements of Laud, on the ground that he had a superstitious belief in dreams. If St Irenaeus had not shared in the quaintly mystical spirit of his age, he would have been a miracle. It is enough for our purpose that he was a good and cultured man.

The testimony of *Tatian* is equally interesting. Tatian wrote about A.D. 170, and he occupies a chronological position which is intermediate between Justin Martyr and Irenaeus. He tells us himself that he was born "in the land of the Assyrians," and brought up as a heathen. He settled at Rome, where he became a pupil of Justin. I have already given some account of his works and opinions

---

\* *Adv. Haer.* iii. 11.

† *Ibid.* v. 30.

in describing his position as a Christian apologist. He is known to us as the author of two works in particular. One is his apologetic *Discourse to the Greeks*, which presents some remarkable coincidences with *St John's Gospel*.\* The other is the famous Gospel Harmony known as the *Diatessaron*. The history of this book is one of the romances of literary exploration.

In several ancient authors there are references to the *Diatessaron*. Early in the 4th century Eusebius writes: "Tatian composed a sort of connection and compilation, I know not how, of the Gospels, and called it the *Diatessaron*. This work is current in some quarters even to the present day."† Late in the same century it is mentioned by Epiphanius. About 453 it is mentioned by Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus, in his book on heresies, and about 852 Isho'dad of Merv, a Syrian commentator, wrote: "Tatian, disciple of Justin, the philosopher and martyr, selected from the four Gospels, and combined and composed a Gospel and called it *Diatessaron*, i.e. the Combined . . . and upon this gospel Mar Ephraem commented." This great Syrian father, Ephraem, died in 373; his work was lost, and the *Diatessaron* was lost also, excepting a few fragments. When orthodox writers appealed to these fragments of the *Diatessaron* to prove that Tatian used the four Gospels, and those Gospels only, their plea was disallowed by Rationalists who were unwilling to think that our four Gospels were universally recognised as canonical by the year 170. But in 1876 there was published a Latin translation of a manuscript in the library of the Armenian monks at Venice. It proved to be nothing more or less than the lost commentary of Ephraem. This discovery demonstrated that the *Diatessaron* had consisted of a narrative of our Lord's life drawn from our four Gospels. The discovery of the commentary was followed

---

\* *Ad Græcos*, 5, 13.

† Eus., *H. E.* iv. 29.

by the discovery of the *Diatessaron* itself. In 1886 a Roman Catholic Copt was shown at Rome a manuscript brought to Rome by Assemani about 1719. It was an Arabic version of the *Diatessaron* containing certain Coptic letters. The Copt declared that a similar book was in the possession of his co-religionists in Egypt. He was the means of sending the book to Rome, and both manuscripts were then carefully examined. In order and contents the new Arabic *Diatessaron*, which supplies certain passages lacking in Assemani's manuscript, closely agrees with the Armenian translation of Ephraem. And while we are still in doubt as to the exact text of Tatian's own work, it is now undoubted that Tatian's *Diatessaron* was a simple combination of our four canonical Gospels, and that it began with the Prologue of the *Gospel of St John*.

We may thus sum up the evidence already examined. In and after the year 170 our four Gospels were assumed by able men of widely different opinions to form the authoritative and exclusively canonical account of the life of Christ.

## § 2. *From A.D. 130 to A.D. 170.*

If we now approach the period in which Gnosticism flourished most vigorously, we shall find that some prominent Gnostic writers give support to our view that the four Gospels were already regarded as the primary written authority for the life of Christ. Wishing to make their speculations pass for the only true Christian theology, the Gnostics followed the Catholic practice of appealing to the current writings and traditions of the time to substantiate their tenets. It has been argued that the Gnostic sects would never have existed if the doctrines of Christianity had been then laid down in divinely attested writings and not in mere tradition. But the argument contains a spurious dilemma. For even in the New Testament the traditions of the Church are not regarded as "mere tradition," and while the Catholics of the

2nd century regarded the Gospels as divinely attested, they certainly did not think that the Gospels, or even the whole sum of apostolic writings, made a creed unnecessary. The Church declared that she was the owner both of the New Testament and of tradition. The Gnostics made the same claim. They sought to confirm their doctrines by an appeal to certain writings authorised by the Church, as well as by an appeal to imaginary traditions.

Apparently about A.D. 170, Heracleon, a Gnostic of the Valentinian school, wrote a commentary on the *Gospel of St John*, marked by considerable acuteness, in spite of his attempt to read into that Gospel the peculiarities of the Gnostic system. Heracleon quotes *St Matthew* and *St Luke* as well as the fourth Gospel. Irenaeus and other writers mention Ptolomaeus in connection with Heracleon. He used the Gospels in the same way as Heracleon. And although we cannot positively assert that the founder of this school made the same use of the Gospels as his successors, the fact that these two eminent Valentinians used at least three of our Gospels gives strong support to the statement of Tertullian that Valentinus himself "is seen to use *the entire document*." \* By this Tertullian seems to mean that Valentinus used all the orthodox Gospels, unlike Marcion, whose treatment of the Gospel will be soon described. Valentinus flourished about A.D. 135. That Basilides, the great Gnostic rival of Valentinus, used at least three of our Gospels is fairly certain. We learn from the book called *Philosophoumena* (generally attributed to Hippolytus) that he commented on *St John*. From the *Dispute between Archelaus and Manes* † we know that he wrote an explanation of the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. He therefore seems to have known *St Luke's*

---

\* *De Praescr.* 38. Tertullian's use of *videtur* does not necessarily imply any doubt on Tertullian's part. He often employs this word in the above sense, as in *Adv. Marc.* iv. 2.

† c. 55, Routh, *Reliquiae Sacrae*, v. 197 (*edit. alt.*).

*Gospel.* His followers certainly used the *Gospels of Matthew, Luke and John.* At the same time Basilides used so-called traditions derived from Matthias and a certain Glaucias, whom he declared to have been an interpreter of Peter, and, according to Origen, he wrote a Gospel which he called by his own name.\* Basilides flourished about A.D. 130.

Against the acceptance of *St John's Gospel* by these notable heretics, we must set the rejection of it by the persons to whom Epiphanius gives the name of *Alogi*—a nickname which has the double meaning of “deniers of the doctrine of the Logos,” and “men without reason.” They existed soon after the middle of the 2nd century. Great stress is sometimes laid on the fact that they rejected the fourth Gospel, as if this proved that the Canon of the Gospels was not yet generally recognised.† But the existence of these individuals—we do not know that they formed a sect—is a fact which cuts both ways. For the *Alogi* possessed no tradition in favour of their view, and the fact that they ascribed the fourth Gospel to Cerinthus confirms the Catholic tradition as to the date and place of the book, while it illustrates the uncritical temper of these primitive Rationalists. For, unless all our information about Cerinthus is false, he could not possibly have written such a book as the fourth Gospel.‡

The evidence of *St Justin Martyr* to our Gospels is of vivid interest. The most probable date of his martyrdom is 163. Born at Neapolis, near to “the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph,” he shows us the traditional belief of a district with which St Irenaeus was not acquainted, and also that of Rome, which Irenaeus knew. Some of his works are lost, including one *Against all Heresies.* But his *First Apology*, addressed to the Emperor Marcus

---

\* *In Luc. Hom. i.*

† Harnack, *Dogmengesch.* vol. i. p. 341 (vol. ii. p. 42).

‡ See Iren., *Adv. Haer.* iii. 11.



Antoninus, his *Second Apology*, and his *Dialogue with Trypho, the Jew*, remain, and their genuineness is not disputed. They are entirely opposed to the idea that, between the time of Justin and Irenaeus, there was any marked change in the degree of authority attributed to our canonical Gospels. Development there may be, but development does not imply revolution.

In these books—two of them addressed to heathen emperors, and one of them dealing with points at issue between Jews and Christians—it was not likely that Justin, a literary man with a philosophic training, would habitually use Christian phraseology, or speak of the Gospels as he might speak of them in writing exclusively to Christians. We shall, therefore, expect to find Justin quoting the Gospels not so much as proof of doctrines as authority for Christ's life and teaching. This is exactly what he does. We can construct a little life of Christ from Justin's quotations. And this life of Christ was obviously drawn from documents which contained substantially the same matter as our present Gospels. It appears that he made use of narratives about Christ which were distinct from our four Gospels—possibly Harmonies like the *Diatessaron*; and it has been thought probable that he made use of the ancient apocryphal Gospel called the *Gospel of Peter*. This Gospel is itself based upon our four canonical Gospels, and if Justin really employed it, we are bound to admit that the four Gospels had for some time been regarded as a quarry for solid facts in the history of Christ.

Justin calls the records which he quotes: *Memoirs of the Apostles* (eight times); *The Memoirs* (four times); *Memoirs composed by the Apostles of Christ and their Companions* (once); *Memoirs made by the Apostles which are called Gospels* (once).\* In the most express way Justin says that on Sunday, at the celebration of the Eucharist, these

---

\* *Apol.* i. 66.



*Memoirs of the Apostles*, or the writings of the Prophets, are read. The latter might be read instead of the *Memoirs*, but Justin mentions the *Memoirs* first. It therefore appears that they were definite and complete books, that they occupied an extremely high position in the Church, and that much stress was laid upon their apostolic origin. There is one other expression used by Justin which calls for notice. He represents Trypho as saying: "I know that your precepts in *what is called the Gospel* are so wonderful and great as to cause a suspicion that no one may be able to keep them, for I have carefully *read* them."\* The word "Gospel" here has the same meaning as it sometimes has in Irenaeus, Tertullian, and others. The books which are elsewhere called Gospels, or Memoirs, were, in reference to their distinctive value, *one book*. They were the record of Christ's life and teaching in different forms. Therefore, this word, which had once meant the *good tidings*, preached by the apostles, already means certain particular *written records*.

That the *Memoirs* used by Justin included our four Gospels is certain. In common with St Matthew, Justin † mentions that the name of Jesus is given: "For He shall save His people from their sins." Various quotations are given from the Sermon on the Mount, and the comment ‡ on the fact that John the Baptist was the true Elias is in exact harmony with *St Matthew* xvii. 13. In common with St Mark, Justin says that Christ changed the names of the two sons of Zebedee to Boanerges. In common with St Luke, Justin has several statements, and especially the statement that the census was taken under Cyrenius, and that Jesus began His ministry when thirty years of age. It has sometimes been denied that Justin was acquainted with *St John's Gospel*; but in his account of Christian baptism he says: "For Christ also said, Except ye be born again, ye

---

\* *Dial.* 10.

† *Apol.* i. 33.

‡ *Dial.* 49.

shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.”\* He not only believes in the *incarnation* of the Logos—a doctrine foreign to those pagan thinkers who spoke of a divine Logos—but also says that He “became Man,” and that “through Him God created all things.”† He appears to refer to the *Memoirs* as the source whence he had learnt that Christ, as the Logos, is the “only-begotten” Son of God,‡ and this peculiarly Johannine title was acknowledged by Justin. We may finally notice that, like John, he regards the lifting-up of the brazen serpent as typical of the crucifixion; that, like John, and unlike the Synoptists, he describes the Eucharist as the “flesh” rather than the “body” of Christ; and that he quotes 1 *St John* iii. 1. The *Apocalypse* he quotes with the name of the author.§

Why, then, does he not mention the writers of the Gospels by name? The answer is simple. The early Christian writers, when addressing readers who were not Christians, did not as a rule make mention of the authors of the Christian sacred books. Tatian and Tertullian, both of whom unquestionably knew our Gospels, do not mention the names of the evangelists when they write for heathen readers. Why should they do so? Matthew and John could be nothing in the eyes of a Greek philosopher or a Roman emperor.

Again, it is asked why his references to the Gospels are not more exact. The answer to this question is twofold. First, minute accuracy is not a mark of primitive quotations. To quote from memory, to abridge, and to paraphrase was very common. It was the custom of St Paul and the custom long after his time. Early writers, with clumsy manuscripts and no concordances, did not habitually verify their quotations if they believed that they were able to give the sense of the passages which they quoted. But, it may be said, Justin’s quotations from the Old Testament, though not exact, are more accurate and less composite than those from

---

\* *Apol.* i. 61.

† *Ibid.* ii. 6.

‡ *Dial.* 105.

§ *Ibid.* 81.

the New Testament. True, but he may have known the Gospel as taught orally better than he knew the Old Testament, and therefore taken less pains to verify his New Testament quotations.

To sum up the evidence of Justin. (1) He was certainly acquainted with our four Gospels. The references given above are by no means exhaustive, but they conclusively point in this direction. (2) He attached a unique significance to narratives of the life of Christ which he believed to be apostolic. (3) He probably made use of not only our Gospels but also some similar records. (4) His conception of the life and teaching of Christ was in fundamental agreement with our Gospels. (5) It cannot be proved that he put any documents on exactly the same level as the four Gospels, and the hypothesis is discountenanced by the fact that his pupil, Tatian, obviously regarded the four canonical Gospels as on a wholly distinct footing.\*

After Justin, we may consider *Marcion*, the great heretic. Marcion, like some amateur theologians of later times, believed that the Old Testament was the millstone round the neck of the Christian Church. He did not even see that a strict Monotheism can alone satisfy the religious mind, and that the Old Testament is at least useful as enforcing Monotheism. He taught that there was a sharp feud between

---

\* I cannot feel sure that Justin used the apocryphal *Gospel of Peter*, chiefly for the following reasons: (1) He had a keen eye for heresy, including Docetism, and would have probably detected the Docetic element in this Gospel; (2) He would almost certainly have used it extensively if he had known it and regarded it as Peter's; (3) He shows no trace of some of the remarkable peculiarities of this Gospel, such as its view of Herod's share in Christ's condemnation; (4) I doubt whether the *Gospel of Peter* had such a wide circulation as is sometimes imagined; it is significant that, about 190, Serapion of Antioch, bishop of an important Christian Church, had to apply to a heretical sect to get a copy of the book (Eus., *H. E.* vi. 12). On the other hand, Justin shows some interesting coincidences with this Gospel, as in *Apol.* i. 35, where he has a rendering of the statement in *St John* xix. 13, very similar to that in this forged *Gospel of Peter*. Justin also uses the same word for the *lot* that was cast at the Crucifixion. I think it probable that Justin and the forger used some common source which would explain these coincidences.

the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New, between the God of Nature and the God of Grace. He regarded the Twelve as false apostles; he prohibited marriage, and even refused to baptise married persons. He thought that St Paul alone had taught the Christianity of Christ. He put out a collection of ten Pauline Epistles which he called his *Apostolicon*, omitting *Titus* and *Timothy*, possibly on the ground that they were addressed to private individuals and not to Churches. The *Epistle to the Hebrews* he could not consistently accept on account of the spiritual significance which it gives to the worship of the Old Testament. Besides the *Apostolicon* he published a Gospel.

He therefore chose the most Pauline of the Gospels, that according to *St Luke*. But it was necessary for him to mutilate the *Gospel of St Luke* in the same way as he mutilated the *Epistle to the Galatians*, for, according to Marcion, Christ could not have had a natural body of flesh and blood; so exalted a Being could not have derived anything from the Maker of the material world. Therefore, Marcion omitted the early chapters of *St Luke* and began his Gospel thus: "In the fifteenth year of Tiberius, God came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught on the Sabbath day." The original text of this expurgated Gospel has been lost, but so much of it has been preserved by Tertullian and Epiphanius, who wrote against Marcionism, that we can have no doubt as to the treatment to which this Gospel was subjected. Tertullian, addressing Marcion, says: "If you had not purposely rejected some, and corrupted others, of the Scriptures which contradict your opinion, the *Gospel of John* would have refuted you."\* He elsewhere says: "Marcion is seen to have selected *Luke* to mutilate,"† and devotes a book to the refutation of Marcion from those passages of *Luke* which he retained. Tertullian therefore assumes that Marcion was acquainted

---

\* *De Carne Christi*, 3.

† *Adv. Marc.* iv. 2.

with our third and fourth Gospels and with other parts of the Bible.

But is it possible that Marcion's Gospel was not a mutilation, as Tertullian thought, but an older and independent document? It is impossible.

Marcion's Gospel contains practically nothing which is not found in *Luke*. He follows the order of *Luke* where *Luke* differs from the other two synoptists; he makes insertions into the narrative where *Luke* makes them; he reproduces passages in which proper names occur which are mentioned by *Luke* only; the text of his Gospel coincides with that of *Luke*, "with no greater variation than would be found between any two not directly related manuscripts of the same text."\* Marcion's Gospel is, therefore, not an independent Gospel. Nor is it a Gospel of which our *St Luke* is an abridgment. Let us notice that:

(1) Marcion cut down the Epistles when they did not support his theories. It is therefore reasonable to infer that he would treat a Gospel in the same manner.

(2) *St Luke* has a marked literary style of his own. No good linguist could fail to see how distinct it is. Now, the style of the passages omitted by Marcion is in close harmony with the style of the rest of Gospel and of *Acts*. But is it probable that a forger of the 2nd century examined *Luke's* Gospel with the microscopic care of a trained modern critic so as to reproduce quite naturally the peculiarities of *St Luke*, as they are found in those passages of our third Gospel which are absent from Marcion's Gospel? And is it probable that at a date when copies of the Gospels were already common, the forger would meet with such success that his expansion was able to supersede the original document?

We must inevitably conclude that the *Gospel of St Luke* is the original document, a document venerated by the Christian world when Marcion wrote. Not only so, but it

---

\* Sanday, *The Gospels in the Second Century*, p. 216.

was already an old document. There are little peculiarities in Marcion's version which show that he used a text of *Luke* "which has not only undergone those changes which in some regions the text underwent before it was translated into Latin, but has undergone other changes besides." \*

### § 3. *From A.D. 90 to A.D. 130.*

Were our other three Gospels known and recognised before Marcion wrote?

*Papias*, bishop of Hierapolis, about A.D. 125, supplies us with our answer. Eusebius† quotes words of Papias to the effect that St Mark, "having become interpreter of Peter, wrote down as far as he remembered, accurately though not in order, the things said or done by Christ." Papias also says that "Matthew composed the oracles of the Lord in Hebrew" (*i.e.* probably Aramaic), and that "every one interpreted them as he was able." Now, it is a remarkable fact that the whole tendency of criticism during the last few years has been to confirm these statements of Papias. A comparison between the synoptic Gospels has led to a profound conviction that our *Gospel of St Mark* is substantially the preaching of St Peter, and that behind the Greek Gospels of *St Matthew* and *St Luke* there was an Aramaic document including discourses of our Lord connected by a narrative. Papias knew Polycarp, and had heard the apostle John; he knew men who had been friends of the apostles and of Aristion and the elder John, "the disciples of the Lord." It appears then that, while many disciples of the apostles were alive, Papias read works attributed to St Matthew and St Mark. That these two works should have disappeared between the beginning and the middle of the 2nd century, and have been supplanted by other documents of the same name, is ridiculously

---

\* Sanday, *The Gospels in the Second Century*, p. 235.

† *H. E.* iii. 39.



improbable. The Christian communities were already widely scattered, and were under no central authority strong enough to impose an alien version of the Gospels upon the Church. Nor can we regard it as conceivable that a Gospel so full of allusions to Jewish institutions as our first Gospel could have been composed in the 2nd century when Jerusalem had ceased to exist. With regard to the fourth Gospel, there appear to be distinct reminiscences of it in the letters of Ignatius written near A.D. 110. Two remarkable parallels with the fourth Gospels are the phrases, "the prince of this world,"\* and "the bread of God which is the flesh of Jesus Christ."† There are also, in Ignatius, reminiscences of matter contained in the synoptic Gospels. The phenomena presented by the *Didache*—which I cannot think is later than A.D. 100—are similar to those found in Ignatius. The *Didache* contains both Johannine and synoptic phraseology.

The letter of *Polycarp* was written soon after the death of Ignatius to accompany a collection of the letters of Ignatius. This short Epistle not only bears witness to the fact that the Christians were already in the habit of making collections of revered writings, but it also quotes or alludes to nine of St Paul's Epistles, including 1 and 2 *Timothy*.‡ It is difficult to resist the belief that Polycarp had the same collection of Pauline Epistles, as we have. Polycarp uses the *First Epistle of St John*, and was therefore probably acquainted with *St John's Gospel*, with which that Epistle is in closest harmony. None of his quotations are traceable to apocryphal writings, and he does quote matter contained in our synoptic Gospels, apparently in a form adapted to oral instruction. Therefore, although we cannot prove that Polycarp used our four canonical Gospels, we can say that

---

\* *Ad Rom.* vii.

† *Loc. cit.*

‡ Harnack (*Dogmengesch.* vol. i. p. 342; vol. ii. p. 44) says: "That the Pastoral Epistles had a fixed place in the Canon almost from the very first is of itself a proof that the date of its origin cannot be long before 180." A statement which contains two false suggestions.



he was in touch with their contents, and that there is no reason to believe that he used Gospel records different from ours. Considering the brevity of his Epistle, it is a very satisfactory witness.

In the letter of St Clement of Rome, written about A.D. 97, we find possible traces of the three synoptic Gospels. They are not quotations in the proper sense of the word, and while we can definitely say that Clement made use of some of the Epistles of our New Testament, we cannot definitely say that he made use of our Gospels. It is possible that he was familiar with some authentic and non-apocryphal document now lost. But it is also possible that he quotes from an oral Gospel employed in teaching catechumens. The theology of Clement leaves us no room for doubting that this Gospel was in theological agreement with our own. We cannot say that Clement did not know our synoptic Gospels, and it must be remembered that the *Epistle of Barnabas*, which is very nearly as old as the *Epistle of Clement*, does appear to quote *St Matthew*.

To sum up. Irenaeus and his contemporaries believed our fourfold Gospel to be the exclusively canonical Gospel or Gospels. Irenaeus knew Polycarp, who knew St John. It is not conceivable that Polycarp, in whose day the fourth Gospel was freely used, would not have protested against it if it had not been by St John. Papias knew Polycarp and others who had known the apostles, and Papias apparently had our two first Gospels. About 140 Marcion used *St Luke's Gospel*, and it was probably used about 130 by Basilides. Possible traces of it occur much earlier. No other record appears to have held as high a position in the first quarter of the 2nd century as our four Gospels.

In conclusion, we may ask what reply we are to make to those who assert (1) that the sayings of Christ which are recorded in early writers vary so much from our four Gospels that they must have been quoted from other sources; (2) that it was by a suddenly determined measure, about A.D. 170,

that our present four Gospels were picked out from among the rest ; (3) that the sacred writings of the New Testament were not regarded as on a level with those of the Old Testament, and were therefore less scrupulously guarded ; and (4) that early Christian literature is too confused and contradictory for us to be sure that Christ lived the supernatural life recorded in our four Gospels.

With regard to (1) we can reply that quotations from memory appear to have been more frequent then than now. The quotations which are made in the New Testament itself are by no means minutely accurate. The practice of combining passages for catechetical purposes may also account for the fact of Christians being familiar with part of the teaching of Christ in a form recast by their instructors. And if it be true that Justin used other written Gospels in addition to our four Gospels, it certainly does not follow that the Church as a whole, or even Justin himself, regarded any Gospel as equally authentic with our four Gospels. (2) There is no evidence whatever to show that the Canon of the New Testament, or of the Gospels, is "something sudden." From the first the Church enshrined the teaching of Christ, and we cannot argue that our written records of that teaching were not regarded as unique even before the end of the first century, on the mere ground that unmistakable evidence of a fourfold Canon of the Gospels is somewhat late in date. Here, as elsewhere, modern Rationalist criticism has been vitiated by the error of assuming that a belief began when the earliest known evidence of such a belief begins. And the evidence of an exclusive fourfold Canon cannot be said to begin as late as 170 or 180. The *Shepherd of Hermas* cannot be much later than 140. It represents the Church as seated on a bench with four feet,\* and this bench is said to have four feet because the world is held together by four elements.

---

\* 3 *Vis.* xiii. 3.

The allegorical style of the book at once suggests to us that the four feet represent something then believed to be absolutely necessary for the spiritual support of the Church. Now, Origen and Irenaeus, who both delighted in the *Shepherd*, both describe the four Gospels in language which is apparently a reminiscence of this passage. It is, therefore, probable that they believed Hermas to be speaking of the Canon of the Gospels, and probable that Hermas was so speaking. (3) The statement that the writings of the Old Testament were regarded as more authoritative than those of the New Testament is not fair. The words of the Lord, whether written or unwritten, were on a higher level than the Old Testament. Long before Justin wrote, the "words," or "oracles," or the "teaching" of the Lord, whether written or oral, were regarded as the primary authority for Christian belief. The Gospels were regarded as vehicles of *the Gospel*, and oral traditions, such as the paragraph of the woman taken in adultery, were, at an early date, occasionally added by copyists of the Gospels. We therefore frankly admit that about A.D. 100 the Christians did not copy the Gospels in the same manner as the Jews then copied the Pentateuch. But this admission does not concede either that the possible additions to the Gospels are necessarily false, or that the Church, as a whole, permitted the addition of a single unauthentic circumstance to the statements of the four evangelists. (4) No sober criticism of early Christian literature, however severe, encourages the supposition that the historical Christ was not a supernatural Christ. The synoptic Gospels are full of materials which must necessarily be earlier than A.D. 70, and the more important Epistles of St Paul were written between A.D. 50 and A.D. 60. They unite not so much in enforcing as in assuming that the Christ was the "only Son," who was sent into the world from a previous state of existence, who rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and claimed to be the complete revelation of God.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE CHURCH AND THE MINISTRY.

CHRIST seems to have seldom used the word "Church." It is only expressly named twice in His discourses, and the report of both these statements is recorded only by St Matthew.\* But we have no reason to conclude with some modern critics that these statements are not authentic.† They come as part of the natural completion of Christ's teaching about the Kingdom of God, and the recent attempts to depreciate the Biblical view of the Church by first laying an exaggerated stress on Christ's doctrines concerning the Kingdom of God, and then saying that the Church only occupies a secondary position, are attempts to play fast and loose with scientific study. It is fair neither towards the Church, nor towards the Kingdom of God, to represent the Kingdom as simply a great community of men who imitate Christ, and to represent the Church as only an external religious institution of men who affirm that they believe in Christ. For the Church is both religious and ethical, and the Kingdom is both spiritual and visible; and it is only natural

---

\* *St Matt.* xvi. 16-19; xviii. 15-20.

† Harnack (*Dogmengesch.* vol. i. p. 76; vol. i. p. 79) roundly asserts that the above passages in *Matthew* "belong to a later period." He thus suggests, without the smallest proof, that the Kingdom of God is distinct from the Church, and he afterwards expressly states that Pope Calixtus, about 220, started the theory that there *must* be wheat and tares in the Catholic Church! (*Op. cit.* vol. i. p. 373; vol. ii. p. 77). These statements are calculated to exaggerate the difference between the theology of the 3rd century and that of the 1st century.

that Christ should identify the Church and the Kingdom. The Jews used both phrases. By the Kingdom of God they meant the dominion of God's Messiah; by the Church they meant the chosen congregation of the Lord, the Israel over which Messiah was to reign.

The word *Ekklesia*, or Church, is the equivalent of the Hebrew word *kāhāl*, which is derived from a root signifying to call or summon, and is frequently used in the later books of the Old Testament for the "assembly" or congregation of Israel. In *Proverbs* v. 14 the words "ekklesia" and "synagogue" are coupled together in the Greek translation of the Bible in an apparently identical sense. Both alike mean the assembly of the chosen people. Their union in the same verse is not without interest when we think of the future antagonism of "Church" and "Synagogue."

Christ says much concerning the Church though He speaks so seldom. In *St Matthew* xviii. 17, He says that if an offender refuses to be persuaded by two or three witnesses the Church is to be told. The Church has a sacred authority, and neglect to "hear the Church" is to be punished by exclusion from its holy society. It has been suggested that the Church in this passage is only a local Jewish community. But the precept is not very intelligible on such a hypothesis, for it is immediately followed by the promise that the "loosing" of discipline which is to be granted to the repentant offender will be ratified in heaven, and by the further promise of an answer to prayer in Christ's "name." The context has a Christian atmosphere about it, and therefore it is probable that the Church is intended to mean a Christian community. In *St Matthew* xvi. 18, the meaning is unmistakable. The Church is here the new divine society, the new Israel, which Christ claims as His own. Christ says: "I will build my Church." It is His own institution and, therefore, the belief of a Christian in the Church will bear an exact relation to his belief in Christ. The bond between its members is supernatural, and

more than the bond created by common philanthropic and educational interests. For the bond is absolute submission to Christ as "the Son of the living God," the knowledge of which truth does not come from flesh and blood. This universal Church, which is to fulfil and supplant the ancient Israel, is spoken of in terms which imply that it is a visible Church and not a society which is known to the eyes of God only. It is a house which is to survive all changes and assaults ; it is opened at the will of those who have received the right to give access to others.

The use of the word "Ekklesia" in *Acts*, and in St Paul's Epistles and elsewhere, shows that the claim which Christ made for His Church was recognised by His disciples. We may reckon in the following manner the principal uses of the word :—

(1) It is a single local Christian community, first of Jerusalem and then of other places where the Gospel was accepted, such as Thessalonica, Corinth, Laodicea (1 *Thess.* i. 1 ; 1 *Cor.* i. 2 ; *Col.* iv. 16 ; so also *Rev.* ii.). "Churches" signifies all individual "ekklesiai" (1 *Cor.* vii. 17) or all the individual "ekklesiai" of a particular district (1 *Thess.* ii. 14 ; 1 *Cor.* xvi. 19 ; *Rev.* i. 4). It should be noticed that St Paul, even when he is combating Judaism, does not speak of a Church of Christ as opposed to a Church of Moses, or as a section of the ancient Church of God. He speaks of the Christian communities as "the Churches of God" (1 *Thess.* ii. 14) which are "the Churches of Christ" (*Rom.* xvi. 16).

(2) The Ekklesia is the one universal Church, as represented in a local individual Church. This use is rare ; it occurs in *Acts* xx. 28, where this universal Church is called "the Church of God." It occurs also in 1 *Corinthians* x. 32, and xi. 22 ; and perhaps in *Galatians* i. 13.

(3) The Ekklesia is the one universal Church, considered in itself and apart from its various local manifestations. This is the dominant use of the word in the *Epistles to the*

*Ephesians* and *Colossians*. In *Ephesians* v. the apostle discusses the relation of husband and wife, and insists that this sacred relation is not adequately understood until it is seen to have an architype in the mutual devotion of Christ and His Church. It is also said in *Ephesians* i. 23, that the Church is the body of Christ. The divine Head of the Church needs a body of members to carry on His work. Their office is the outflow of His office, and the body which they together form manifests the "fulness" of His incarnate attributes, as He manifests the divine attributes of the Father (*Eph.* i. 23; *Col.* i. 19). It is obvious that this Ekklesia is not invisible in the sense that it is only composed of holy beings who are out of this world, for the Gentiles now living on earth are described as raised into heavenly regions. It therefore includes persons on earth, who are mystically in heaven, because they form the body of a Head who rules in heaven. Nor is the Ekklesia invisible in the sense that it is a merely inward association of elect or converted men. For the body is guided by ministers, whose authority takes different outward expressions (*Eph.* iv. 11; *Col.* i. 25). The fact that this Church is one outward ecclesiastical body is also shown in 1 *Corinthians* xii. 13, where the outward rite of baptism is spoken of as the means of incorporation into that "one body," which is Christ's. In this latter passage St Paul uses language which leads up to the developed teaching of the later Epistles.

To sum up: (1) The Jews used the word "Church" to describe God's visible organised society, and expected that it would be merged into a visible organised kingdom. (2) Christ established a society which He called both Church and Kingdom. He repeatedly used parables to show that the visible unity of this Kingdom, or Church, is a matter of divine revelation, although He sometimes used the phrase "Kingdom of God" to describe the invisible principles which inspire the Church. (3) St Paul uses the phrase "Kingdom of God" in this latter sense, and gives to the visible Church



the attributes of unity, universality, and sanctity which belong to Christ's conception of the Kingdom. In so doing, the apostle is simply developing the teaching of Christ. The author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* evidently agrees with Paul in regarding the Church as one, universal, and holy, when he says: "Ye are come to the Church of the first-born, who are enrolled in heaven." It is sometimes maintained that this cannot refer to a visible Church composed of both good and bad. This mistake arises from the idea that none can be enrolled in heaven except those who are infallibly predestined to be saved. No such idea seems to be present in the author's mind.

From the Church we turn to *the ministry of the Church*. Christ does not completely indicate the forms which the orders of the ministry are to assume. He gives to the apostles an authority similar to His own, and, except for their election of Matthias to take the place of Judas, they defer the organisation of the Church until after the day of Pentecost. After Pentecost the members of the Church were deeply conscious of the fact that they were the people of that new covenant of which the prophets had spoken. Hence the Christians claimed that sacerdotal position which had belonged to the people of the ancient covenant. They felt that they were a "royal priesthood," and "kings and priests unto God." A supernatural power and ministerial function belongs to any baptised person who abides in the doctrine and fellowship of the apostles. All are united with Christ, the High Priest, as truly as they are united with Christ, the Son of God. They share in His work.

But the fact that every circumcised Jew was a priest \* did not exclude the appointment of men as the representatives and mouthpiece of the priestly race. And in the same way the fact that every baptised Christian was a priest did not

---

\* *Exod.* xix. 6.

exclude the appointment of a hierarchy.\* This hierarchy was regarded, not as the Church, but as a necessary part of the Church. For the Church is one body and therefore animated by one life, but it possesses different members with different capacities. So, when the apostles desire to have assistants, they summon "the multitude of the disciples," and then say: "Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." The laity then elect the deacons, for it is assumed that the same Spirit who inwardly moves one man to enter the ministry moves another to elect him to that ministry. In the *Didache* and in *St Clement's Epistle* we find that even the *episkopoi* are elected by the Church, or "with the consent of the whole Church."†

But although we find that laymen elected their ministers, we find no trace of any idea that the laity could either alter the constitution of the Church or ordain their ministers. This is equally true of the deacons and of the other order to which the apostles entrusted higher powers than those given to the deacons. They are appointed on the principle of Apostolical Succession, which is that no such ministers of the Church can receive power to act as representatives of man to God, and as "stewards of God's mysteries," unless they receive the laying-on of hands either from the apostles, or from those whom the apostles ordained. This ceremony was believed to convey a supernatural power, and to be a means by which the Holy Spirit works.‡ Without this principle of Apostolical Succession the visible unity of the Church would have been impossible.

During the last 300 years three fundamentally different theories have been held as to the principal orders of ministers appointed by the apostles. These theories are the Presby-

---

\* *Rom. xv. 16.* St Paul describes his ministration of the Gospel to the Gentiles by hierarchical or sacerdotal terms. The verse is figurative, but it distinctly implies that the apostleship is an appointed medium between God and man.

† *Didache*, xv. ; *Clem.*, *Ad Cor.* 44.

‡ *1 Tim.* iv. 14 ; *Acts* xx. 28.

terian, the Democratic, and the Episcopal. Until the 16th century it was universally held that the Episcopal system was apostolic. I shall now describe the three theories, and in so doing I shall use the words, bishop, Episcopacy, and Episcopal in their modern sense, retaining the Greek word *episkopos* for the official described by that name in the New Testament, and in other writings older than A.D. 110.

(1) *The Presbyterian Theory.* According to this theory, only two permanent and universal orders of the ministry were appointed by the apostles, namely (a) the presbyters or elders otherwise called *episkopoi*, and (b) the deacons. It is maintained that Episcopacy is only a phase of Presbytery, and a degenerate phase, a bishop being destitute of any spiritual rights which do not lawfully belong to a presbyter. The main grounds for this theory are the fact that at no time has the bishop acted quite independently of the presbyter, and the fact that in the New Testament the word *episkopos*, or "overseer," which in later times meant a bishop, is a title given to the presbyter.

Now, the Presbyterian theologians seem to be quite correct in their assumption that the word *episkopos* in the New Testament has a definite meaning, and does not merely signify any man entrusted with spiritual oversight.

The words *episkopos* and *episkopein* are used both in the Septuagint, and in Philo, in a general sense, without reference to one definite religious office. But this is certainly not the case in the letters of St Ignatius, and hence we are bound to enquire when the terms became specialised, and whether Ignatius was the first writer to give the word *episkopos* a specific meaning. In *Titus* i. 7, and 1 *Timothy* iii. 2, it appears to be used as a title of office, the Greek article which is employed before the word showing that the sentences are meant to apply to a man who exercises a certain specific function of "oversight." This view of the meaning of the word *episkopos* is corroborated by the use of the word *diakonos* in these

Epistles. In 1 *Timothy*, the word *diakonos* is a recognised title for a definite class of men, not merely men who minister to the members of the Ekklesia, but men who are formal ministers of the Ekklesia, and have to pass through some kind of probation.

It is true that the word *diakonos* is not always used technically. Thus, in 1 *Corinthians* iii. 5, St Paul had described Apollos and himself by the word *diakonos*, inasmuch as it was through their instrumentality that the Corinthians had accepted Christianity. And it is possible, though by no means certain, that the word *diakonos* has this same untechnical meaning in *Romans* xvi. 1, where Phoebe is described as a *diakonos* of the Church at Cenchreae. But in the Pastoral Epistles the word *diakonos* is used in a technical sense, and the requirements made of the moral character of the deacons and of the *episkopoi* are parallel. It is therefore absurd to suppose that the word *episkopos*, which is so closely connected with the word *diakonos*, can be used except as the technical title of a particular office. And this is the only natural interpretation of the two words in the salutation which opens the *Epistle to the Philippians*.

We may therefore feel confident that the Presbyterians are right in maintaining that the word *episkopos* in the New Testament denotes a definite ecclesiastical office. But we shall soon see that there are many reasons for believing them to be wrong in their idea that the apostles appointed no permanent officers over the *episkopos*.

(2) *The Democratic Theory.* Under this name we may group together various recent and conflicting speculations which have been propounded by modern Rationalists, or by those who have made concessions to Rationalism in the supposed interests of criticism. The most important forms of the Democratic theory are as follows:—

(a) The ministry of the local Christian Churches varied in accordance with chance and convenience. It is urged, for

instance, that the existence of one kind of ministry at Philippi does not prove that the same kind of ministry existed in Galatia.\* We may briefly remark that the early Church was so conscious of a corporate life that, unless the evidence of such a variation is unmistakable, we are justified in assuming that the Church possessed an organisation which did not vary essentially in different places.

(b) The Jewish Christian Churches adopted from the Jewish Church a presbyterate to administer the moral discipline of the community, the ministration of the word and sacraments being a later conception of the presbyterate. The *episkopos* was an officer chosen to administer the finance of a Gentile Christian community, the name and function being derived from contemporary pagan societies.† This view underestimates the fact that the word *episkopos* and kindred words were used by the Jews,‡ and that the Jewish use of the word is likely to have had more weight with the early Christians than any pagan use of the word. And it is so obvious that the primitive *episkopoi* took an important part in the public services of the Church,§ that no one can intelligently hold that the sole or primary duty of the *episkopos* was a secular duty.|| And there is no evidence to show that the Gentile Churches organised themselves in a manner different from the Jewish Christian Churches.

(c) The presbyters were simply the older and more mature disciples, or a distinct class of such disciples honoured by their less experienced brethren, but holding

\* This theory is presented by Réville, *Origines de l'Épiscopat*, especially p. 151.

† The theory of Hatch (*Bampton Lectures*).

‡ In the LXX. the word means superintendent, president, or commissioner (2 *Kings* xi. 18; *Neh.* xi. 9; 1 *Macc.* i. 51).

§ Clem., *Ad Cor.* 44; *Didache*, xv.

|| Hatch apparently modified his views on this subject, or at least wished to be understood to agree with Harnack that the *episkopos* was concerned with the administration of aims and worship (*Expositor*, *third series*, vol. v. p. 99).

no official position of any kind; while the *episkopoi* were presbyters who, as officials of the Church, dispensed alms and led the religious services.\* To prove that the presbyters were not official, an appeal is made to the contrast drawn, or apparently drawn, between them and the younger brethren in 1 *St Peter* v. 5; 1 *Timothy* v. 1; *Titus* ii. 2; Clement, *Ad Cor.* 1, 3, 21. Appeal is also made to lists of the officials of the Church, in which *episkopoi* and deacons are mentioned and not presbyters, as *Philippians* i. 1; 1 *Timothy* iii.; *Didache* xv.

We must notice that the writers who hold any form of the Democratic theory have great difficulty in accepting the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles of St Paul, and generally reject it. Their idea of distinction between a presbyter and an *episkopos* seems contradicted by *Acts* xiv. 23; xx. 17, 28; *Titus* i. 5, 7; Clement, *Ad Cor.* 44, 54; and 1 *St Peter* v. 2, where the duty of a presbyter is described by the word *episkopein*. Perhaps it seems strange to us that a man should be called both presbyter and *episkopos*, but we have an interesting parallel in our English universities, where the words "fellow" and "don" are in daily use to describe one and the same person.

(3) *The Episcopal Theory.* This theory maintains that the apostles appointed first the diaconate, secondly an official presbyterate, and thirdly an order superior to the presbyterate, and known for some years by a variety of names. It is admitted that for a time other orders existed. It is assumed that the word *episkopos* was originally a title of the presbyters. The only difficulty that attaches to this theory is the shifting character of the names given to the Christian clergy in the earliest documents. That this difficulty is not insuperable is proved by the abundant evidence which exists to show that Episcopacy is apostolic. In studying our evidence we must bear in mind that even the opponents

---

\* Weizsäcker, *Apostolic Age of the Church*, vol. ii. p. 329 (Eng. trans.). Harnack, *Expositor*, third series, vol. v. p. 334.



of Episcopacy admit that, at about A.D. 170, Episcopacy appears to have been the universal form of Church government. And it is hard to suppose that a Church which was so tenacious of apostolic doctrine should have permitted without opposition, and without any historical record, so momentous a change as the change from a Democratic or Presbyterian government to an Episcopal government.

In the *Didache*, which is perhaps the oldest Christian document not included in the New Testament, and in any case can hardly be later than the year 100, we find there is a local ministry of *episkopoi* and deacons. But above these local officers there is a higher itinerant ministry of "prophets." These peripatetic ministers of the Gospel have the right to settle where they will, and take a prominent part\* in the celebration of the liturgy, as in *Acts* xiii. One of their functions is "to teach the truth,"† and to criticise them is to expose oneself to the guilt of sinning against the Holy Ghost. Above the local ministry there are also "teachers" and "apostles." These apostles are not the Twelve, and can hardly, if at all, be distinguished from the itinerant prophets. We should notice that the local ministry is regarded as sharing in the offices of the prophets and teachers,‡ and also that the prophet's office appears to be very similar, not only to that of the "apostle," but also to that of the "teacher."§ The functions of this itinerant ministry remind us of the apostles in the synoptic Gospels, and of the evangelists in the Epistles of St Paul. It is a significant fact that the prophets are called "high priests." This title, by assimilating the Christian ministry to the Jewish ministry, suggests that the author believed that the threefold ministry of high priest, priest, and Levite, was reproduced in the Christian organisation, and it also suggests that he grouped together the itinerant

---

\* *Didache*, x.

† *Ibid.* xi.

‡ *Ibid.* xv.

§ So also Polycarp, the bishop, is said to have been "an apostolic and prophetic teacher" (*Mart. Poly.* 16). Even in Paul's time the "teacher" tended to lose his original place and leave his office to other ministers (*cf.* 1 *Cor.* xii. 28 ; *Eph.* iv. 11 ; 1 *Tim.* iii. 2).



ministers in one class, that of high priest. It is therefore absurd to use the *Didache* as furnishing evidence against Episcopacy on the ground that it does not imply the local diocesan Episcopacy of a hundred years later.

The letter of St Clement of Rome, written in A.D. 97, shows us the same desire to connect the ministry of the new dispensation with the ministry of the old. After speaking of Christian "offerings and ministrations" he says: "To the high priest his own proper ministrations have been assigned, and to the priests their proper place ordained, and their proper ministries enjoined upon the Levites; the layman has been bound by the layman's ordinances. Let each of us, brethren, in his own order, make his Eucharist to God in gravity."\* Clement strongly asserts the principle of Apostolical Succession, and mentions *episkopoi* and deacons as appointed by the apostles. He regards the power to exercise spiritual functions as derived by succession from the apostles. The word "presbyter" was evidently used as the title of an ecclesiastical office, for Clement, in reference to the contemporary disturbance at Corinth, declares: "Happy those presbyters who have died and have no cause for fear lest any one remove them from their determined place."† It is reasonable to suppose that the word *episkopoi* has the same meaning as in the New Testament, and signifies the vocation of the presbyters. Over the presbyters are the hegoumenoi, or prohegoumenoi (rulers), a word used, perhaps, in a less technical sense, in *Hebrews* xiii. 7, 17, 24. It is impossible to deny that Clement speaks of a threefold ministry,‡ for even if the prohegoumenoi are the same

---

\* *Ad Cor.* 40, 41. Clement plainly acts as bishop of Rome, and in chap. 40 he seems to claim a prophetic knowledge of deep things. Clement of Alex. (*Strom.* iv. 17. 107) calls him an "apostle." This throws light on the use of the word "apostle" in the *Didache*.

† *Ibid.* 44.

‡ Harnack, finding it impossible to make the statement of Clement agree with the Democratic theory, says that his statement is "a theory devised to meet an emergency that had arisen" (*Expositor*, third series, vol. v. p. 332). This is a cheap way of escaping the force of evidence.

as the episkopoi, then the episkopoi must be distinct from the presbyters. Otherwise it would be absurd for the author to say: "Let us reverence our rulers; let us honour our presbyters." \*

Another important document of the early Roman Church is the *Shepherd of Hermas*, a treatise written about A.D. 140. The presbyters appear as a privileged class in the Church. The author also enumerates "apostles, *episkopoi*, teachers, and deacons," † and in this list does not mention the presbyters. He also mentions *prohegoumenoi* (rulers) and *protokathedritai* ‡ (occupants of the chief seat), and elsewhere *prophets*. The writer habitually uses symbolical language, and hence we need not suppose that all these titles were necessarily given to the ministers of his own day. In fact, the apostles are regarded as ministers of a past generation, and perhaps the teachers also. There are still prophets, some of them false prophets. One of the marks of a false prophet is an ambitious desire for the "chief seat." This indication, when coupled with the facts that St Clement does not mention these prophets, and that he himself occupied the first position in the Roman Church, shows that the Roman Church of the sub-apostolic age had no prophets occupying the high position which belongs to the prophets in the *Didache*.§

The *prohegoumenoi*, in the *Shepherd*, are admitted even by writers who oppose Episcopacy,|| to be distinct from the *protokathedritai*. Their name suggests, as in the Epistle of Clement, that they form the highest order. The deacons cause us no difficulty. We are therefore left to consider the presbyters, *episkopoi* and *protokathedritai*. Now, our interpretation of these words must be guided by a consideration of the date and spirit of the book. Did Hermas give a de-

\* *Ad Cor.* 21.

† 3 *Vis.* v.

‡ 3 *Vis.* ix.

§ The order of prophets mentioned by Hermas apparently survives in the order of readers, while the more primitive prophets are best represented by the order of bishops.

|| Renan, *L'Église Chrétienne*, p. 420; Weizsäcker, *Apostolic Age of the Church*, vol. ii. p. 329 (Eng. trans.).

liberately archaic tone to his writing or did he not? If not, then we are justified in assuming that the word *episkopoi* means bishops, as in the letters of Ignatius, and that the presbyters are distinct from them. But if the book is purposely archaic, or as some distinguished critics believe, contains materials a generation earlier than A.D. 140, then we may assume that the *episkopoi* are what they are in Clement's Epistle. What is the conclusion that results from these alternative hypotheses?

The conclusion is practically the same in both cases. It is the existence of an Episcopal ministry. Hermas speaks of "the presbyters who preside over the Church." \* It is therefore probable that these are the "occupants of the chief seat," and we have (1) *episkopoi*, called also *prohegoumenoi*; (2) *presbyters*, called also *protokathedritai*; and (3) *deacons*. But if Hermas here retains an earlier stage of phraseology, we have (1) *prohegoumenoi*; (2) *episkopoi*, called also presbyters and *protokathedritai*; and (3) *deacons*. It is impossible to square this with the idea that the *Shepherd* implies a Presbyterian or a Democratic form of government.

The Epistles of St Ignatius, written early in the 2nd century, give very important evidence to the ministry of the Church. It is universally admitted that he uses the word *episkopos* in the sense of bishop. Now that the authenticity of this collection of letters is placed almost beyond dispute, writers who believe that the primitive Church was organised after a Presbyterian or a Democratic form of government sometimes endeavour to escape the force of its evidence by a new argument. They urge that Ignatius is desiring to secure recognition for a new conception of the ministry, and that this accounts for his strong insistence upon Episcopacy.† I am not aware that this argument was used when the letters

---

\* 2 *Vis.* iv.

† Ramsay, *Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 370 (4th edit.); Réville, *op. cit.* p. 519. It is amusing to observe that Harnack, *loc. cit.*, uses a similar argument with regard to *Clement*.

were regarded as a forgery, nor is it a natural mode of interpreting the language employed. Ignatius not only attributes to the bishop a thoroughly monarchical position, but speaks of bishops as "established unto the boundaries of the earth." \* His language seems to imply that bishops were appointed by the apostles. † He regards Episcopacy as the guarantee of Church unity. And if it be urged that his insistence upon the duty of obeying the bishops is a proof that Episcopacy was then a novelty, we must say the same with regard to presbytery, for he emphatically declares that his readers ought to obey the presbyters. And yet no critic ventures to assert that the presbyters were then a new order in the Church.

These patent facts with regard to the Ignatian Epistles closely agree with the ministry described in St Paul's Pastoral Epistles and in the Epistle of Clement. There is no fundamental difference between Ignatius the bishop, who derived Episcopacy from the apostles, Timothy and Titus, who were commissioned by St Paul, and Clement's "rulers" and "eminent men" who performed the apostolic work of appointing other ministers. ‡

Consequently the critics who hold the Democratic theory frequently repudiate some of St Paul's Epistles, while the critics who hold the Presbyterian theory try to explain away the statements of Clement and Ignatius. The latter school is also very eager to make the most of what is said, or rather not said, in the Epistle of Polycarp, written to the Philippians soon after the death of Ignatius. Polycarp was bishop of Smyrna, and he apparently distinguishes himself from the presbyters of his own Church, but he does not mention any one who occupies an unique position at Philippi. He simply tells the Philippians to obey "the presbyters and deacons." This exhortation is confidently brought forward as a proof that Polycarp, a disciple of St

---

\* *Ad Eph.* iii.

† *Ad Trall.* vii.

‡ *Ad Cor.* 44.

John, did not regard Episcopacy as essential. This is to assume that the absence of a bishop is the same thing as the non-existence of a bishop. We might almost as well argue that if the bishop of Oxford told the Christians of Cambridge to obey their priests, this would sufficiently prove that Cambridge was not in any Episcopal diocese. We must also notice that it is almost impossible that Ignatius should have written as he does write if there were no Episcopal system at Philippi. There is another reasonable explanation of St Polycarp's words. It is that the word "presbyters," or "seniors," is here used as a general term for the higher officers of the Church, and includes a bishop. To a modern reader this suggestion may perhaps seem fanciful, but Irenaeus, who remembered Polycarp, gives this very name to the bishops of Rome in his celebrated letter to Pope Victor.\* That Irenaeus did not believe in a Presbyterian organisation is too obvious to require any further comment. A similar use of the word is suggested in 1 *Timothy* iv. 14, where St Paul, though counting himself above the ordinary presbyters, seems to include himself in the presbyterate.

In the brief summary which I have given above, it has been impossible to show in detail the contradictions which mark modern criticism of the Episcopal system. But these contradictions are so manifold that they do much to prove that the apostles, after appointing presbyters and deacons, appointed, as Clement says, "eminent men," known under various titles until they were given the name of *episkopos*, which name was then withdrawn from all who did not possess the sole oversight of a Christian community. Even writers who have least sympathy with Episcopacy admit that it was of the greatest practical utility during the 2nd century, and I find it difficult to perceive why they doubt that the apostles had enough wisdom to devise such a prudent measure.

---

\* Eus., *H. E.* v. 24.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

IN studying the worship of the early Church, as in studying her polity, it is sometimes necessary to read history backwards and forwards alternately. We are thus able to trace the various threads of ecclesiastical custom until we find them meet. In *Acts* we read that the Christians still frequented the Temple services, and that Peter and John went openly to the Temple "at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour."\* It is probable that many were also wont to pray with the Jews at the third and sixth hours. We know that these hours were occasionally observed by Christians more than a century before the institution of monastic worship in the 4th century. In time of persecution Christians no doubt generally said their daily prayers in private only, but it is quite a mistake to suppose that daily public prayers began in monasteries, for at Rome they were said in Church about A.D. 200.†

With regard to the observance of festivals, the early Christians naturally accepted some Jewish usages. They adopted the name of "Pascha," or Passover, for their annual celebration of the death of the true Paschal Lamb, Jesus Christ. It is probable that St Paul's custom of observing Pentecost was followed by the early Church, for we find

---

\* *Acts* iii. 1.

† *Hipp. Canon.* § 217 ; in Duchesne, *Origines du Culte Chrétien* (2nd edit.).

that in the time of Tertullian \* all the fifty days from Easter to Pentecost were kept as festal. In addition to these festivals, in honour of Christ and the Holy Spirit, the Christians of the 2nd century dedicated the day of any martyr's death—his "birthday," as they called it—to joy and prayer.†

The Jewish rabbis laid great stress upon fasting, both regular and occasional, and it was usual to impose public fasts if, for instance, the autumn rains were late in falling.‡ Some Jewish rigorists fasted every Monday and Thursday through the year.§ In virtue of Christ's teaching, the Christians looked upon fasting as a natural accompaniment of prayer.|| It was usual for Christians to bestow upon the poor the money or food saved by fasting. "If any one among them is poor and in want, and if they have no spare food, they fast two or three days in order to supply to the needy their lack of food."¶ Wednesday and Friday were the ordinary fast-days, and this fast was probably kept until at least 3 P.M. Tertullian, writing about the year 198, shows us that the rigorist party fasted on these days until sunset, and other Christians until 3 P.M.

Fasting was also usual before *baptism*, as we learn from the *Didache*.\*\* It is possible that this was usual even in early apostolic times, the more so as we find in *Acts* xiii. 3, that worship is accompanied with fasting. The *Book of Acts* contains some clear instances of baptism being administered immediately after conversion, but in some of these cases it would have been unwise to delay the rite by a preliminary fast. It was held that baptism was the means of bestowing a new birth and forgiveness of past sins. Justin says that in the water of baptism we obtain the forgiveness of sins and

\* *De Cor.* 3.

† *Mart. Poly.* 18.

‡ *Mishna*: *Taanith*, i. 4-7; *Talmud*, 12 a.

§ *Didache*, viii.

|| *Barn.* iii.; *Didache*, viii.; *Herm.*, 5 *Sim.* iii.

¶ *Aristides*, *Apol.* 15.

\*\* *Didache*, vii.



regeneration, and he calls it "the bath of repentance and the knowledge of God." \* And before him Barnabas maintains that the Jews, unlike the Christians, had not "that baptism which bringeth a remission of sins"; and Ignatius says: "Let your baptism remain your shields"—that is, "Do not throw away your defence against sin." Baptism was regarded as so essential that Hermas supposes that the saints of the Old Testament were baptised in Hades by Christ or His apostles. The strongly sacramental teaching about regeneration which marked this age had been anticipated in the New Testament (especially in *St John* iii. 5; *Rom.* vi 4; *Col.* ii. 12; *Tit.* iii. 5). It is throughout assumed that material elements may be so consecrated as to influence the soul. It is evident from 1 *Corinthians* xii. 13, that St Paul considered baptism to be necessary for all his converts. †

In the *Didache* the rite of baptism includes (1) previous instruction and fasting; (2) a person who baptises the convert; (3) the use of water—running water if possible; (4) the repetition of the formula, "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The prominence given to the Trinitarian formula in this Jewish-Christian document is very strong evidence for the genuineness of the same formula in *St Matthew* xxviii. 19. ‡

Justin gives the following account of baptism:—

"Those who are convinced of the truth of our doctrine, and have promised to live according to it, are exhorted to prayer, fasting, and

\* Justin, *Apol.* i. 61; *Dial.* 14; Barn. xi.; Ignat., *Ad Poly.* vi.

† Bruce (*St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p. 241) takes some pains to prove that St Paul did not regard baptism as essential. But in saying, "There may have been some who remained unbaptised, for anything he says to the contrary," Prof. Bruce seems more bold than accurate.

‡ I am unable to find a satisfactory explanation of this baptismal formula in the writings of Prof. Harnack. In his work on the Apostles' Creed, a pamphlet written for popular circulation, he maintains that "the Creed is the baptismal formula enlarged," and asserts that "whoever introduces into the Creed the doctrine of the three Persons of the Godhead, explains the Creed contrary to its original meaning and perverts it" (*Das Apostolische Glaubensbekenntniss*, pp.

repentance for past sins, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are led by us to a place where is water, and in this way they are regenerated, as we also have been regenerated—that is, they receive the water-bath in the name of God, the Father and Ruler of all, and of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost. For Christ says: ‘Except ye be born again, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus, from children of necessity and ignorance we become children of choice and of wisdom, and partakers of the forgiveness of former sins. . . . The baptismal bath is called also illumination because those who receive it are enlightened in the understanding.’\* ”

The word “enlightenment” has a parallel in the language of the Greek mysteries, and became a common metaphor for baptism. Dr Hatch writes as if the contemporaries of Justin had borrowed it straight from the Greek mysteries.† But the word “enlightened” is, in some sense, applied to men initiated into the Christian life in *Hebrews* vi. 4. Greek diction may have given the phrase a greater popularity, but the first use of the word may easily have come from the apostles of Him who was “a light to lighten the Gentiles.”

It is nearly the same with regard to the word “seal,” which is used by Hermas, Clement of Alexandria, and others as a metaphor for baptism. The word “seal” was used in some heathen cults to describe a rite in which the worshipper was marked on the forehead in token of a new ownership. The phrase is used by St John in *Revelation*, where the tested adherents of Jesus are described as

---

19, 26). The Creed is, therefore, to be interpreted as Unitarian, this interpretation being based on the baptismal formula. But if we turn to the *Dogmengeschichte* we find that the baptismal formula itself is thrown overboard as not authentic. “It cannot be directly proved that Jesus instituted baptism, for *Matthew* xxviii. 19 is not a saying of the Lord. The reasons for this assertion are: (1) It is only a later stage of tradition that represents the risen Christ as delivering speeches and giving commandments. Paul knows nothing of it. (2) The Trinitarian formula is foreign to the mouth of Jesus, and has not the authority in the Apostolic Age which it must have had if it had descended from Jesus himself” (*Dogmengesch.* vol. i. p. 76; vol. i. p. 79). So the Creed is to be interpreted as Unitarian, this interpretation being based on the baptismal formula, and the baptismal formula is to be rejected because it is Trinitarian!

\* *Apol.* i. 61.

† *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 295.

"sealed," and the habit of confirming converts immediately after baptism, and of regarding confirmation as the complement of baptism, naturally led the Christians to apply it to the sacrament by which the convert entered the service of Christ.

The author of the *Didache* regards immersion as the ordinary method of baptism, but not as essential. Pouring water upon the head will suffice if enough water for immersion cannot be obtained.\*

Infant baptism was probably usual from apostolic times. It seems to be implied in the statement of Polycarp that he had been the servant of Christ for fourscore and six years; in the great stress which Hermas lays upon baptism; in Justin's comparison of baptism with circumcision, and his statement that many were then living who were made disciples of Christ "from their childhood."† Origen compares it with circumcision, and says: "The Church has received it as a tradition from the apostles to administer baptism even to infants."‡ Clement of Alexandria bears witness to the practice of infant baptism, and Irenaeus says: "We are cleansed as infants newly-born and spiritually born again."§ The last passage is ambiguous, but the practice is obviously implied in *Adv. Haer.* ii. 22. 4, where he speaks of "infants and little children" as "born again unto God," so it is surprising that Harnack, apparently speaking of a period including the time of Tertullian, says: "There is no sure trace of infant baptism in this epoch."|| The Jews were in the habit of baptising Gentile proselytes, and there are strong grounds for thinking that the children of these proselytes were baptised if they were born before their parents were converted to Judaism.¶ If so, we have a good additional reason for trusting the statement of Origen.

---

\* *Didache*, vii.

† *Apol.* i. 15; cf. *St Matt.* xxviii. 19.

‡ *Ep. ad Rom.* Lib. v. 9.; in *Lev. Hom.* viii. 3.

§ *Gk. Fragm.* 33.

|| *Dogmengesch.* vol. i. p. 198 (vol. i. p. 207).

¶ Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Appendix xii.

Among the early Christians the first day of the week was always marked by a celebration of the *Eucharist*. This was the central point of Church life, commemorating the day on which the Lord rose from the dead, and continuing the service which He had peculiarly identified with Himself. Some Christians also believed that God had created the world on this day.\* The early Christian Church in Jerusalem celebrated the "breaking of bread" every day, but this was not at first the custom with the Gentile Churches. The moral effect of this "Lord's Supper" was immense, it being considered as an act by which believers became incorporated with Christ and united with each other. To partake of the consecrated bread and wine was to partake of the body and the blood of Christ.† The symbols are the vehicle of God's highest gift to man. Ignatius, in writing against certain heretics who deny the reality of Christ's human nature, reproaches them with denying "that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour."‡ Justin compares the descent of Christ into the elements with His incarnation,§ evidently believing that the elements become the body and blood of Christ. The same doctrine is found repeatedly in Irenaeus.

It was usual to speak of the Eucharist as a sacrifice. The earliest document which suggests this doctrine is 1 *Corinthians* x. 14-22. St Paul there draws a parallel between the Eucharist in which Christians enter into communion with Christ and the sacrifices which were offered to idols, and placed the eaters thereof—so it was thought—in communion

\* Justin, *Apol.* i. 67.

† 1 *Cor.* x. 16.

‡ *Ad. Smyrn.* vi.; cf. *Ad. Eph.* xx.—"Breaking one bread which is the medicine of immortality."

§ *Apol.* i. 66. Harnack (*Dogmengesch.* vol. i. p. 203; vol. i. p. 212) suggests that Justin derived this idea from some miracle in the Greek mysteries. He does not appear to recognise that the language of St Paul is as difficult to explain as the language of Justin. Prof. Gardner is bolder, and derives even the Lord's Supper of the New Testament from the Eleusinian mysteries (*The Origin of the Lord's Supper*, p. 19).

with a god. It seems to be implied that the Eucharist is offered before it is eaten. In *Hebrews* xiii. 10, occurs the much-disputed phrase: "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." The word translated altar means either "an altar of the true God," or "a sanctuary where sacrifice is offered." The latter is the more common meaning in early Christian books.

Now, it is often said that the word is here a metaphor for the Cross. But it is difficult to suppose that the author would speak about eating off an altar if he meant believing in the Cross, and it is also difficult to exclude the idea that this altar is the table of a sacred feast. The verse, therefore, seems to contain a reference to eating the Eucharist, and this at once explains why the priests of the Jewish tabernacle are said to be excluded. If so, the "altar" is the "holy table," a meaning which the word apparently bears once in the writings of Ignatius,\* who says: "There is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup unto union in His blood; there is one altar as there is one bishop." If, however, the word in *Hebrews* xiii. means "sanctuary," the doctrinal import of the passage remains the same, for it still means that Christians have either a material sanctuary or a metaphorical sanctuary (such as the Church)† in which they offer sacrifice.

It is often urged that it is contrary to the teaching of this Epistle to maintain that any such offering could be made, the sacrifice of Calvary not requiring to be supplemented by any other sacrifice. But while the author does not believe that the sacrifice of Calvary is repeated or supplemented, it is obvious that he thinks that Christ continually offers it, for he says that Christ must have "somewhat to offer."‡ The offering is made in the heavenly holy of holies, otherwise the action of Christ would not correspond with that of the high priest described in chap. ix. 7. Christ's offering in

---

\* *Ad. Philad.* iv.    † *Cf. Ignat., Ad. Trall.* vii.    ‡ *Heb.* viii. 3.

heaven is the pleading of the work of Calvary, and Christ's people share His action when they mystically represent the shedding of His blood and proclaim His death. The sacrifice of the Church is united with that of the eternal Priest.

It is certain that the early Christians looked upon the Eucharist as a sacrificial meal. In the *Didache* \* it is called a sacrifice, and is spoken of as the pure offering foretold in *Malachi* i. 11. In the same manner Justin quotes this prophecy in an abbreviated form, and calls the Eucharistic offerings "those sacrifices which Jesus, who is the Christ, commanded to be offered." † The same doctrine is apparently pre-supposed by St Clement of Rome as early as A.D. 97, for he not only compares the Christian *episkopoi* with the Jewish priests, but he also states that a chief duty of the former is "to offer the gifts," ‡ and calls their office a "sacerdotal ministry" (*leitourgia*). And while there is no doubt that Clement includes the oblation of ourselves in his idea of the Christian sacrifice, this is very far from excluding the oblation of the sacrament. Those ante-Nicene writers, who write explicitly concerning the Eucharist, "agree in interpreting the Holy Eucharist as a sacrifice in which we offer the first-fruits of creation with thanksgiving for Creation, and Providence, and Redemption, and so consecrate them into the body and blood of Christ and make a memorial of Him." §

The hour and manner of celebrating the Eucharist deserve our attention. The first clear account of the hour is that given by Pliny in A.D. 112. "The people declared that all the wrong they had committed, wittingly or unwittingly, was this, that they had been accustomed on a fixed day to meet before dawn and sing antiphonally a hymn to Christ as a god, and bind themselves by a solemn pledge (*sacramento*) not to commit any enormity, but to abstain from theft, brigandage, and adultery, to keep their word,

\* *Didache*, xiv.

† *Dial.* 117.

‡ *Ad Cor.* 44.

§ F. E. Brightman, author of *The Ancient Liturgies*.



and not to refuse to restore what had been entrusted to their charge if demanded. After these ceremonies they used to disperse and assemble again to share a common meal of innocent food, and that this they had given up after I had issued the edict by which, according to your instructions, I prohibited secret societies." The ex-Christians who informed Pliny evidently used the word *sacramentum* to imply communion, while Pliny, as a heathen, understood it in the sense of an oath to live virtuously.

Now this early hour was not chosen in order to evade the police, for the Christians met again for their love-feast at a later hour when secrecy would have been difficult. The evening was the safe time for secrecy, as we learn from the case of some cowardly Christians at Carthage in the time of Cyprian, men who offered the sacramental chalice in the evening, and would not partake of it in the morning lest the odour of the wine should lead to their detection.\* It therefore appears to have been a rule to communicate very early, before partaking of any other food. Thus Tertullian, writing about A.D. 198, assumes that the Christian wife who has the Eucharist reserved in her house, will communicate before taking any food, and in his treatise on the *Crown*, written about 202, he says: "The sacrament of the Eucharist administered by the Lord, at the time of supper . . . we receive even at our meetings before daybreak."† I think it quite probable that there is a reference to such a rule in St Clement's Epistle.‡ He says: "We ought to do all things in order, as many as the Master (*i.e.* God the Father) hath commanded us to perform at their appointed seasons. Now the offerings and ministrations He commanded to be performed with care, and not to be done rashly or in disorder, but at fixed seasons and hours." I see no reason to doubt that the word *hour* has the meaning which it frequently bears in the Gospels, and signifies not a season, but an *hour*

---

\* Cyp., *Ep.* lxiii. 15.

† *De Cor.* 3.

‡ *Ad Cor.* 40.



*of the day.* If so, the writer, who probably had known St Peter and St Paul, may mean that the apostles had appointed fixed hours for the Eucharist. And we can say with confidence that in and after the time of Tertullian the hours were intimately connected with fasting. Christians celebrated the Eucharist at 3 P.M. on Wednesdays and Fridays, because they partook of no food on those days before 3 P.M.; they celebrated the Eucharist on Sundays before dawn, Sunday being a feast and not a fast. I therefore incline to the view that after such abuses as had occurred at Corinth when the love-feast preceded the Lord's Supper, the apostles placed the love-feast after the Lord's Supper. In *Acts* xx. 11, the Eucharist alone seems to be kept, and the fast before communion, which is suggested in *Acts* xiii. 2, may well have become general before the death of the apostles.

While the *Agape* or love-feast was retained, it was of a strictly religious character. Tertullian shows that it was begun with prayer. After a meal of strict moderation, hands were washed and lights brought in, hymns were then sung, and the meeting ended with prayer.\* In the *Canons of Hippolytus*, which record the practices of the Roman Church about A.D. 200, the Agape takes place every Lord's Day before sunset. Careful directions are given to preserve decorum. All stood up, and the senior of the clergy present—the Bishop if possible—offered a thanksgiving, breaking a loaf of bread and signing it with the sign of the Cross; this bread was called “the bread of exorcism.” If no priest was present each person broke his own bread. After the meal lights were lighted. Sometimes there was a sermon. The service ended with Psalms. When the Eucharist had been offered for the departed an Agape was also customary.†

The Eucharistic service appears to have somewhat varied in different districts, but its origin is undoubtedly to be found in the service of the synagogue. The Jewish service

---

\* *Apol.* 39.

† *Hipp. Canon.* §§ 164-182.

included readings from the Law and the prophets, the singing of Psalms and a homily. To these the Christians added the consecration and communion of the body and blood of Christ and preaching by the "prophets." In *St Clement's Epistle* we have a prayer which shows us the kind of intercession which was offered in the Christian Church at the close of the 1st century. "We would have Thee, Lord, to prove our help and succour. Those of us in affliction save; on the lowly take pity; the fallen lift; upon those in need arise; the sick heal; the wandering members of Thy people turn; fill the hungry; redeem those of us in bonds; raise up those that are weak; comfort the faint-hearted; let all the nations know that Thou art God alone and Jesus Christ Thy Son, and we Thy people and the sheep of Thy pasture." \*

The first complete account of the Eucharist is that given by Justin Martyr, but there is some information given in the *Didache*,† which is the earliest book in which the sacrament is definitely called the Eucharist, *i.e.* the supreme thanksgiving. The account implies:—

(a) Thanksgiving for the wine. "We thank Thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David Thy servant, which Thou hast made known to us through Jesus Christ Thy Servant. To Thee be glory for ever."

(b) Thanksgiving for the broken bread. "We thank Thee, our Father, for the life which Thou hast made known to us through Jesus Thy Servant. To Thee be glory for ever."

After the thanksgiving the congregation ate and drank: Communion was fenced by the rules that only the baptised could communicate, and that a public confession of sins was required from those whose conscience was troubled. After the partaking there was another thanksgiving and a prayer of supplication. The "prophets" are to be permitted to give thanks in what words they will.

\* *Ad Cor.* 59.

† *Didache*, ix.

I have already mentioned that about A.D. 200 the Eucharist was sometimes specially offered for the souls of departed Christians. We cannot tell exactly when this custom began, but we have no reason to doubt that the early Christians always maintained the Jewish custom of praying for the dead. They never supposed that death removed their friends beyond the power of love and intercession. There are early inscriptions in the catacombs which contain wishes for the happiness of the dead. The date of these inscriptions is often rather uncertain. But the long epitaph in memory of the bishop Abercius, discovered by Mr Ramsay at Hierapolis, and certainly written in the 2nd century, contains an unmistakable request for prayer on behalf of the departed. German Rationalists have shown prodigies of ingenuity in a vain endeavour to prove that this epitaph is pagan.

It is doubtful whether the Christians of this period asked the departed saints to pray for them, and we find the flock of Polycarp indignantly repudiating the insinuation of the pagans that they worshipped their martyred bishop.\* But in the 3rd century Origen speaks of the saints as helping the living with their prayers,† and that they do thus help us was probably believed from the Apostolic Age. For the author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*‡ alludes to the crowd of saintly witnesses who encompass us. St Clement (*Ad. Cor.* 56) speaks of God and the saints being reminded of the needs of sinners, but his use of the word “saints,” in chap. 46 makes it probable that he means living Christians.

It is fitting that we should close these notes on Early Christianity with quoting, in its simplicity, the description which Justin Martyr gives of the celebration of the Eucharist. The service had not all the grave splendour which marked the worship of the 4th century. The Christian temple had no “polished corners,” no trained voices to sing “the song of Moses and the Lamb.” We may add that ornaments which

---

\* *Mart. Poly.* 17. † *Hom.* xvi. in *Lib. Jesu Nave.* § 4. ‡ *Heb.* xii. 1

are useful now might have been injurious then. Christianity must always manifest some antagonism to a world which has lost a true sense of beauty until it is able to present to the world an art which is hallowed and inspired. The Puritan rashly breaks what has been consecrated; the early Christian slowly redeemed what had been defiled.

"On the day called Sunday," writes Justin, "all those who live in the towns, or in the country, meet together; and the memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time allows. Then, when the reader has ended, the president addresses words of instruction and exhortation to imitate these good things. Then we all stand up together and offer prayers. And when prayer is ended, bread is brought and wine and water,\* and the president offers up alike prayers and thanksgivings with all his energy, and the people give their assent, saying the *Amen*. And the distribution of the elements, over which thanksgiving has been uttered, is made, so that each partakes; and to those who are absent they are sent by the hands of the deacons.† And those who have the means, and are so disposed, give as much as they will, each according to his inclination; and the sum collected is placed in the hands of the president, who himself succours the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and the prisoners, and the foreigners who are staying in the place, and, in short, he provides for all who are in need."‡

A little before, Justin says "this food is called among us *Eucharist*." He mentions that the Christians kiss§ one another before the elements are brought to the president, and records the words spoken by Christ when He ordained this service. Justin's description is probably a description of the service as it was celebrated at Rome, and the date at which he writes is probably A.D. 152. This general structure of the service is common to all the ancient liturgies. It is reproduced in the *Canons of Hippolytus*. Partly because these Canons were written for Christian readers, they contain

\* The chalice of mixed wine and water is mentioned in the epitaph of Abercius.

† This is the earliest mention of reservation of the Eucharist.

‡ *Apol.* i. 67.

§ See *Rom.* xvi. 16; cf. *St Matt.* v. 24.

a more minute account than that in Justin's *Apology*. The Eucharist includes the reading of Scripture, a sermon, a confession of sins, the kiss of peace, an oblation of the elements, the *Sursum Corda*, the Eucharistic prayer, the blessings of first-fruits presented by members of the congregation, the communion. The first-fruits seem to have been given to "the poor of God's people," so that we find here, as in Justin, a chivalrous readiness to help those who cannot help themselves. Even at this early date the service was of considerable dignity, the bishop being assisted by presbyters and deacons "clad in white vestments, more beautiful than all the people, and as splendid as possible ; but good works excel all vestments."

Certainly this chaste and inward worship was a great contrast to the gorgeous medley of Roman heathenism. And yet the early Christian liturgy was able both to subdue and to attract. No pagan rites suggested a drama so profound as that of this interchange of song, and prayer, and silence. No symbol was so significant as this oblation of earth's gifts and this reception of the Bread of heaven. And we, whose days know something of that weariness which fell upon the Roman world, shall, if we return in spirit to this ancient Eucharist, breathe once more the freshness of the dawn, and shall whisper with the friend of Jesus : "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

*The dates marked with an asterisk are dates which the author considers to be slightly uncertain.*

	A. D.
Friday, 18th March. The Crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . . .	29
Herod Philip II. dies . . . . .	34
Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judaea, is succeeded by Marcellus . . . . .	36
Conversion of St Paul . . . . .	*36
GAIUS, <i>Emperor</i> . . . . .	37
Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea, banished	39
Writings of the Jewish philosopher Philo . . . . .	40
CLAUDIUS, <i>Emperor</i> . . . . .	41
Herod Agrippa I. dies . . . . .	44
Council held by the apostles at Jerusalem . . . . .	*49
St Paul's <i>Epistles to the Thessalonians</i> . . . . .	*51
NERO, <i>Emperor</i> . . . . .	54
St Paul's Epistles—1 <i>Corinthians</i> , <i>Galatians</i> , 2 <i>Corinthians</i> , <i>Romans</i> . . . . .	*55-56
Porcius Festus, procurator of Judaea . . . . .	*58
St Paul in Rome. The <i>Epistles to Philippians</i> , <i>Colossians</i> , <i>Philemon</i> , <i>Ephesians</i> . . . . .	*59-61
The <i>Gospels of St Mark</i> , <i>St Matthew</i> , and <i>St Luke</i> , written probably in the order here given. The original conclusion of the <i>Gospel of St Mark</i> having been lost, the last verses were supplied at an unknown date by Aristion, a presbyter who had known the Lord . . . . .	60-70
St James, Bishop of Jerusalem, suffers martyrdom . . . . .	62

	A. D.
Albinus, procurator of Judaea . . . . .	62
St Paul's Epistles—1 <i>Timothy</i> , <i>Titus</i> , 2 <i>Timothy</i> . .	*61-67
Burning of Rome, and persecution of Roman Christians .	64
Linus appointed <i>Bishop of Rome</i> by St Peter and St Paul	*64
The <i>Epistles of St Peter</i> . . . . .	*64
The <i>Epistle to the Hebrews</i> . . . . .	66
Martyrdom of St Peter and St Paul at Rome . . . .	*67
Jewish war against Rome . . . . .	66-73
GALBA, <i>Emperor</i> , succeeded by OTHO . . . . .	69
St Polycarp born . . . . .	69
July. VESPASIAN, <i>Emperor</i> . . . . .	69
Jerusalem destroyed. 4 <i>Exra</i> written after this date .	70
The <i>Acts of the Apostles</i> written . . . . .	*70-75
Anencletus, <i>Bishop of Rome</i> . . . . .	*76
June. TITUS, <i>Emperor</i> . . . . .	79
September. DOMITIAN, <i>Emperor</i> . . . . .	81
The <i>Gospel of St John</i> . . . . .	85-90
Clement, <i>Bishop of Rome</i> . . . . .	*88
The <i>Revelation of St John</i> . . . . .	93-96
The Letter of St Clement of Rome to the Corinthians .	95-97
September. NERVA, <i>Emperor</i> . . . . .	96
Euaerestus, <i>Bishop of Rome</i> . . . . .	*97
January. TRAJAN, <i>Emperor</i> . (In his reign the daughters of Philip suffered martyrdom.) . . . . .	98
The <i>Epistle of Barnabas</i> . . . . .	*98
Symeon, <i>Bishop of Jerusalem</i> , suffers martyrdom. . .	*104
Alexander, <i>Bishop of Rome</i> . . . . .	*105
St Ignatius, <i>Bishop of Antioch</i> , writes his seven <i>Letters</i> , and suffers martyrdom at Rome. St Polycarp, <i>Bishop</i> of Smyrna, writes his <i>Letter to the Philippians</i> . .	*110
Pliny writes to Trajan about the Christians . . . .	111-113
The apocryphal <i>Preaching of Peter</i> written, and also the apocryphal <i>Gospel of Peter</i> . . . . .	100-130
The <i>Annals of Tacitus</i> written . . . . .	115-117
Sixtus, or Xystus, <i>Bishop of Rome</i> . . . . .	*115
August. HADRIAN, <i>Emperor</i> . . . . .	117
The apocryphal <i>Apocalypse of Peter</i> . . . . .	120-140
Suetonius, <i>De Vita Caesarum</i> . . . . .	120
Hadrian's letter to Minucius about the Christians .	124
The <i>Apology</i> of Quadratus and the <i>Apology</i> of Aristides .	125
Telesphorus, <i>Bishop of Rome</i> . . . . .	*125
Papias writes his <i>Expositions of the Words of the Lord</i> .	*125-130



## 296 HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

	A.D.
Hadrian orders the erection of Aelia (Jerusalem) . . .	*130
St Irenaeus born . . . . .	*130
The revolt of Bar Cochba . . . . .	132-135
Hadrian's letter to Servianus about the Christians. About this time Basilides, the Gnostic, teaches at Alexandria, Cerdo and Valentinus, the Gnostics, come to Rome . . .	134
Marcus the first Gentile Bishop of Jerusalem . . .	135
Hyginus, <i>Bishop of Rome</i> . . . . .	*136
July. ANTONINUS PIUS, <i>Emperor</i> . . . . .	138
Pius, <i>Bishop of Rome</i> . . . . .	*140
The <i>Shepherd of Hermas</i> written . . . . .	*140
The <i>Dialogue of Ariston of Pella</i> is probably of nearly the same date . . . . .	*140
Marcion founds a great heretical Church. The Apostles' Creed is in use as the baptismal creed of the Catholic Church of Rome . . . . .	144
Marcus, Bishop of Alexandria . . . . .	*145
Ptolemaeus, Heracleon, and Marcus, the Gnostics, teach	145-185
Primus, Bishop of Corinth . . . . .	150
Hegesippus, a Catholic of Syria, journeys to the West and to Rome . . . . .	*150
Justin's <i>First Apology</i> written . . . . .	152
Bardesanes, the Gnostic, born . . . . .	154
This year St Polycarp journeys to Rome where Anicetus is Bishop . . . . .	154
Justin's <i>Dialogue with Trypho</i> written . . . . .	*155
23rd February. St Polycarp suffers martyrdom; the Catholic Christians of Smyrna write the letter which describes his death . . . . .	155
Montanus begins to teach his heresy in Phrygia, and is joined by Maximilla and Priscilla . . . . .	157
Justin's <i>Second Apology</i> written . . . . .	*157
March. MARCUS AURELIUS, <i>Emperor</i> . . . . .	161
Justin suffers martyrdom under the prefect Junius Rusticus Soter, <i>Bishop of Rome</i> . About this time, while Sergius Paulus is proconsul of Asia, Melito and Apollinaris of Hierapolis write concerning a Paschal controversy which broke out at Laodicea. Sagaris, bishop of Laodicea, suffers martyrdom. Miltiades and Melito write their Apologies for Christianity in this reign	*166
Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, writes various letters . . .	170
Tatian, the author of the <i>Diatessaron</i> , leaves the Catholic Church . . . . .	172

A. D.

Eleutherus, <i>Bishop of Rome</i> . About this time Montanus dies, and Hegesippus writes <i>Memoirs</i> . . .	175
Great persecution at Lyons. Pothinus, the bishop, suffers martyrdom. Shortly afterwards Irenaeus becomes bishop, having previously visited Eleutherus. About this time Celsus writes against the Christians . . .	177
Athenagoras writes his <i>Plea for the Christians</i> . . .	177
Maximilla, the Montanist, dies . . .	179
17th March. COMMODUS sole <i>Emperor</i> . . .	180
17th July. The Martyrs of Scili suffer . . .	180
Soon after this Apollonius is martyred at Rome under the praetorian prefect Perennis . . .	180
Death of Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, and author of the books to <i>Autolycus</i> . Irenaeus begins his work <i>Against Heresies</i> . . .	*182
Origen born . . .	*185
Victor, <i>Bishop of Rome</i> ; Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria . . .	189
Serapion, Bishop of Antioch . . .	190
Great Paschal controversy; letters of Victor, and opposition of Irenaeus to Victor. About this time Clement begins to lecture at Alexandria . . .	190-191

NOTE.—As to the early bishops of Rome, ancient authors show considerable agreement, not only in their record of the names of the bishops, but also of the years of their episcopate. The exact date of their accession is often doubtful, but the difficulty is almost entirely removed if we accept the year 67 as the date of the martyrdom of St Peter, and hold that Linus was appointed bishop in 64. This simple suggestion has a threefold advantage: (1) it keeps the date given by Eusebius for St Peter's death; (2) it is consistent with the oldest calculations as to the episcopate of the various bishops; and (3) it is consistent with the statement of Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.* iii. 3. 3).



# INDEX.

---

ABERCIOUS, epitaph of, 291, 292.  
 Abraxas, 226.  
*Acts*, authenticity of, 39; Christology of, 41, *et seq.*  
 Aelia Capitolina, 203.  
 Aeons, 222, 225.  
 Agape, the, 289.  
 Alogi, 252.  
 Anicetus, connection with Polycarp, 89, 135; bishop of Rome, 153.  
 Antioch, Episcopacy in, 129; centre of Gnosticism, 223.  
*Apocalypse*, Christology of, 73; date of, 113, 199.  
 Apollinaris, on Paschal question, 87; on Montanism, 96; as an Apologist, 183.  
 Apologists, 117, 168; theology of, 187.  
 Apostles, wider use of term, 274, 275.  
 Apostles' Creed, in its original form, 146.  
 Apostolical succession, 269; in Clement, 275.  
 Aquila, at Rome, 144.  
 Aristides, *Apology for the Christians*, 170, *et seq.*; on fasting, 281.

Ariston of Pella, witness to orthodoxy of Jewish Christians, 202.  
 Asceticism, of St Paul, 65, 193; of Essenes, 214.  
 Asia, Church of, 73, *et seq.*  
 Asiarchs, 104, 136.  
 Athenagoras, as an Apologist, 182; theology of, 190.  
 Augustus, his reforms, 2; attitude towards imperial cult, 13; treatment of Jews, 102.  
 BAPTISM, in St Paul's teaching, 63; later ceremonial of, 237, *et seq.*; mode of, 281, *et seq.*; Trinitarian formula of, 282; of infants, 284.  
 Bar Cochba, 203.  
 Bardesanes the Gnostic, 223, 224.  
*Barnabas, Epistle of*, 121, *et seq.*  
 Basilides, teaching of, 225, *et seq.*; testimony to the Gospels, 251.  
 Baur, on St Paul, 67; influenced by Luther, 69; collapse of his theory, 71.  
 Beroea, persecution in, 103.  
 Bishops, relation to presbyters, 128; to apostles and prophets, 274, 278.

- CANON of the Gospels, 242, *et seq.*;  
of the New Testament, 243, 260.  
*Canons of Hippolytus*, 240, 289,  
292.  
Carpocrates the Gnostic, 227.  
Catholic, first use of the term, 128.  
Cerdo the Gnostic, 223.  
Chalcedon, council of, definition of  
the two natures of Christ, 234.  
Christ, date of death, 294 ; resur-  
rection of, 44, *et seq.*; ascension  
of, 45 ; second coming of, 50.  
Christ, Person of, His own explana-  
tion, 24, *et seq.*; death of, His  
own interpretation, 35 ; St Paul's  
doctrine of, 38, 63, 78, 83 ; St  
John's doctrine of, 73, *et seq.*;  
in later Church, 234.  
Christmas Day, when first observed,  
19.  
Church, relation to Kingdom of  
God, 264 ; senses of the word,  
266, 267 ; organisation of, 268,  
*et seq.*  
Church and State, relations of,  
101, *et seq.*  
Clement of Alexandria, on Paschal  
question, 87 ; defence of Chris-  
tianity, 169 ; on Gnosticism, 221,  
224.  
Clement of Rome, testimony to  
persecution, 113 ; description of  
Epistle, 123, *et seq.*; relation to  
St Peter, 154 ; use of New Testa-  
ment, 261 ; witness to Episcopacy,  
275, *et seq.*  
Clementine apocryphal literature,  
126, 156, 215 ; its Ebionite  
character, 215.  
Colossae, false teaching at, 193.  
*Colossians*, *Epistle to*, Christology  
of, 38, 78, 193.  
Communism in early Church, 48.  
Confession of sins, 140, 290.  
Creed, Apostles', origin of, 146, 282.  
Creed, Nicene, 238.  
DEACONS, in *Acts*, 269 ; in *Didache*,  
274 ; in *Hermas*, 277.  
Demetrius the silversmith, 104.  
*Diatessaron* of Tatian, 249.  
*Didache*, theological standpoint of,  
195 ; relation to our Gospels,  
260 ; ministry in, 274 ; baptism  
in, 282 ; Eucharist in, 287, 290.  
*Diognetus*, *Epistle to*, 182.  
Dionysius of Corinth, 150.  
Docetism, 129, 133, 195, 235.  
Domitian, treatment of Christians,  
112, *et seq.*; claims divine  
honours, 113.  
Domitilla, 112.  
EBIONITES, not primitive Chris-  
tians, 205, 209 ; use of the term,  
207 ; distinct from Nazarenes,  
209 ; tenets of, 210, *et seq.*; Gos-  
pel of, 212 ; Essene or Gnostic  
party of, 213.  
Egypt, pagan cults of, 12, 15, 21 ;  
Gnosticism of, 224, *et seq.*  
Elders. *See Presbyters*.  
Eleusinian mysteries, 236, 285.  
Emperors, worship of, 12, 113, 136 ;  
effects of, 14 ; attitude towards  
Christianity. *See Persecution*.  
Ephesus, St John in, 84 ; Poly-  
crates of, 89, *et seq.* ; riot in *Acts*  
at, 104.  
Episcopacy, the term here used in  
its modern sense, 270 ; admitted  
by all to be dominant by A.D.

Episcopacy—*continued*.

170, 274; rudimentary form of, implied in *Didache*, 274; implied in Clement, 275; in Hermas, 277; definitely asserted by Ignatius, 128, 278; apparent exception in Polycarp, 279.

*Episkopos*, the term borrowed from the Jews, 272; denoted office of the presbyters, 273; then denoted bishop, 277.

Eucharist, proof of Christ's claim, 35; bearing on Paschal controversy, 90, *et seq.*; among Ebionites, 210; as a sacrifice, 285, *et seq.*; celebration of, in *Didache*, 290; in Justin, 292; in *Canons of Hippolytus*, 293.

Eusebius, on Paschal question, 86, 93; on persecution of Christians, 120; on 2 *Clement*, 126; on episcopate of Peter, 147; on authority of Roman see, 165; on Ebionism, 211; on the *Diatessaron*, 249.

Exorcism, bread of, 289.

FAIRBAIRN, A. M., on Greek influence upon theology, 232.

Faith, Luther's doctrine of, 60; St Paul's doctrine of, 61; Baur influenced by Luther's doctrine of, 69.

Fasting, in Hermas, 140; of Jews, 281; of Christians, 281; before baptism, 281; before communion, 289.

Festus the procurator, 104, 294.

Flora, Epistle to, 224.

*Galatians*, Epistle to, 54 *et seq.*; recipients of, 54.

Gallio, 104.

Gamaliel, 49.

Gnosticism, origin and nature of, 218, *et seq.*; in Pauline Epistles, 221; schools of, 222, *et seq.*; literature of, 228; allegorism of, 233; alleged influence on Catholic theology, 234; on Catholic worship, 235, *et seq.*; testimony of, to our Gospels, 250.

Gospels, Christology of, 30, *et seq.*; canonicity of, 243, *et seq.*; date of, 263, 294.

Greek language in the Roman Church, 146, 238.

HANAN II., compasses death of St James, 197.

Harnack, concession to Catholic tradition, p. v.; attacks the resurrection and ascension, 45, *et seq.*; acknowledges most of Pauline Epistles, 71; represents Christ as gradually deified, 130; misrepresents Christology of Hermas, 141; misinterprets Irenaeus on the Roman see, 162; underrates evidence for virgin-birth of Christ, 205; retains term God-Man while denying Divinity of Christ, 206; exaggerates influence of Gnosticism on the Church, 234, *et seq.*; places the date of the formation of the Canon of the Gospels and of the New Testament too late, 244, 260; explains away Irenaeus as to St John, 247; repudiates Christ's words about the Church, 264; evades statements of Clement about the ministry, 275;

Harnack—*continued*.

repudiates Christ's words about baptism, 283; derives orthodox doctrine of the Eucharist from Paganism, 285.

Hatch, on the influence of Greek thought upon Christian doctrine, 232; of pagan mysteries upon Christian worship, 236; on the organisation of the Church, 272.

*Hebrews, Epistle to*, Christology of, 38, 78; on the Law, 194.

Hegesippus, testimony to orthodoxy of Jewish Christians, 199.

*Hegoumenoi*, in *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 275; in *Clement's Epistle*, 275.

Heracleon the Gnostic, 224, 251.

*Hermas, Shepherd of*, 137; penitence in, 139; theology of, 140, 189; on the Roman Church, 160; ministry in, 276.

Herod Agrippa II., relations with Jewish Christians, 198.

Hippolytus, on the Paschal question, 87; reputed author of the *Philosophoumena*, 96; Canons of, *see Canons*.

ICONIUM, persecution at, 103.

Ignatius, death of, 115, 129; letters of, 127, *et seq.*; on the virgin-birth of Christ, 130, 207; on the seat of authority, 159; on Judaism, 196; use of Johannine language, 260; on Episcopacy, 270, 277; on the Real Presence, 285.

Infallibility, papal, 157, *et seq.*

Irenaeus, on Polycarp, 132, 247; on the primacy of Rome, 162, *et seq.*; opposes Victor, bishop of

Irenaeus—*continued*.

Rome, 165; on the Ebionites, 207, 210; on Gnosticism, 233; on the Person of Christ, 234; evidence to the fourfold Gospel, 247; evidence to *St John's Gospel* and teaching, 247; use of the word presbyter, 279; witness to infant-baptism, 284.

JAMES, brother of the Lord, 47, 197, 205.

Jerusalem, Church of, early condition of, 39, *et seq.*; later history of, 201.

— first destruction of, 198; second destruction of, 204.

Jews, their attitude towards the early Christians, 49, 178, 201; take part in the martyrdom of Polycarp, 137.

*John, Gospel of*, on the Logos, 73, *et seq.*; on the Father, 79, *et seq.*; on the Paraclete, 81; doctrine of righteousness, 83; mysticism, 83; relation to Pauline theology, 78, 83; authenticity of, 76, *et seq.*, 100, 247, *et seq.*

Jowett, B., criticism of Gospels, 69.

Judaisers, opposed by St Paul, 193; in Ignatius, 195; in Justin, 208; in later times, 209, *et seq.*

Judaism, Hellenistic, 25; Messianic doctrine of, 27.

Judgment, Jewish conception of, 29, *et seq.*; Christ's teaching on, 35, 50; primitive Christian conception of, 51.

Julian, bishop of Apamea, 99.

Junius Rusticus condemns Justin, 118.



Justification, St Paul's doctrine of, 54, *et seq.*; St John's doctrine of, 69, 83.

Justin Martyr, writings of, 174, *et seq.*; attitude towards Judaism, 179; on the Trinity, 187, *et seq.*; use of our four Gospels, 252, *et seq.*; of apocryphal writings, 256; on baptism, 282; on the Real Presence, 285; on the Eucharistic sacrifice, 287; on Christian worship, 292.

KINGDOM OF GOD, conception of Jews, 34, 265; of Christ, 34, 264; Harnack on, 264.

LAODICEA, Paschal controversy at, 87.

Law, St Paul's conception of, 54, *et seq.*; Christians' relation to, 58, 66; early Christians' attitude towards, 60; Judaisers' teaching on, 193, 208, *et seq.*

Laying-on of hands, 269.

*Liberian Catalogue*, 147.

Linus, bishop of Rome, 152, 297.

Logos, in Philo, 26, 74; in *St John*, 76.

Lord, significance of term, 43, 130.

Lord's Day, observance of, 44, 285.

Lord's Supper. *See Eucharist.*

*Luke, Gospel of*, on the Law, 57; used by Heracleon the Gnostic, 251; treatment of, by Marcion, 257.

Lyons and Vienne, martyrs of, 99, 118, 246.

MARCION, relation to Gnosticism, 229; baptismal ritual of, 240; use of *St Luke's Gospel*, 257.

*Mark, Gospel of*, 259.

Mary, the Blessed Virgin, 130, 206; in Irenaeus, 207.

*Matthew, Gospel of*, 50, 251, 259.

Maximilla, Montanist prophetess, 96, 99.

Melito, on Paschal question, 87; opposes Montanism, 96; his apology, 134.

Messiah, Jewish conception of, 26, *et seq.*; pre-existence of, according to Jews, 29, 36; primitive Christians' idea of, 41.

Miltiades, the Apologist, 183.

Miracles in *Acts*, 40, 43.

Mithra, worship of, 18.

Mommsen, account of early persecutions, 107.

Montanism, rise of, 95; conservative elements in, 97, 100; new style of prophecy in, 97; presupposes the circulation of the Johannine writings, 100.

Muhammadanism, derived from Essene Ebionism, 215.

NAZARENES, as name of a sect of Christians, 205, *et seq.*; in Jerome, 209; in Epiphanius, 212.

Nero, persecution by, 105, *et seq.*

New Testament. *See Canon.*

Nicolaitans, a Gnostic sect, 224.

OLD TESTAMENT, as used by the first Christians at Jerusalem, 46; St Paul's use of, 57; as used by Essene Ebionites, 214; repudiated by Gnostics, 223; by Marcion, 256; quoted in a manner different from the New Testament, 263.

- Organisation of the Church, 268, *et seq.*
- Origen, on Paschal question, 95 ; on the virgin-birth, 207 ; on Ebionism, 211 ; on infant-baptism, 284 ; birth of, 297.
- PAGANISM, Roman, character of, 6 ; partly prepared men for Christianity, 20.
- Paschal controversy, in the time of Polycarp, 86 ; at Laodicea, 87 ; in the time of Victor, 89, 164 ; misrepresented by Rationalists, 90 ; a testimony to the authenticity of *St John's Gospel*, 90, 95.
- Paschal lamb eaten by Christians, 88.
- Pastoral Epistles, authenticity of, 71.
- Paul, testimony to the Resurrection, 45, 53 ; conversion of, 53 ; explanation of the Law, 55 ; doctrine of Faith, 60 ; doctrine of Baptism, 62 ; misrepresented by Rationalists, 67, *et seq.* ; points of contact with St John, 72, 78, 83 ; work in founding the Roman Church, 150, *et seq.* ; criticism of Paganism, 168 ; attitude towards Colossian heretics, 193 ; repudiated by Judaisers, 209 ; use of his writings by Marcion, 230, 257 ; use of the word " Church," 266 ; teaching on the Lord's Supper, 285, *et seq.*
- Pella, Christians retire to, 198.
- Penitence, required of converts, 41 ; discipline of, 139.
- Pentecost, significance of, 39 ; feast observed by Christians, 280.
- Pergamum, worship of emperor at, 113.
- Persecution, in Jerusalem, 49 ; by Jews elsewhere, 103, 178, 203 ; by Nero and Domitian, 105 ; by Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus, 114 ; by Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, 118.
- Peter, Pentecostal discourse of, 42, 46 ; relations with St Paul, 69 ; alleged twenty-five years' episcopate, 147 ; martyrdom of, 149 ; relics of, 150, 156 ; organises the Roman Church with Paul, 150 ; leadership of, in early Church, 152 ; relation to *Mark's Gospel*, 259.
- Peter, Epistles of*, evidence as to persecution, 105, 110, 154 ; evidence as to Peter's place of residence, 149.
- Philippi, opposition to Paul at, 103.
- Philippians, Epistle to*, 70.
- Philo of Alexandria, 26, 74, 294.
- Philosophy, attitude of Christians towards, 169, 176, 182, 186.
- Phoebe of Cenchree, 271.
- Pistis Sophia*, Gnostic book, 228.
- Polycarp, connection with Paschal controversy, 86, 135 ; letter of Ignatius to, 127, 132 ; letter of, 133 ; martyrdom of, 136 ; use of New Testament, 260 ; on the ministry, 278.
- Prayer, hours of, 281 ; for the dead, 291.
- Presbyters, in Church at Jerusalem, 46 ; name of an official class, 273 ; the same as *episkopoi*, 273 ; in Clement, 275 ; in Hermas, 277 ; wider use of term, 279.

Priscilla the Montanist, 96, 99.  
 Prophecy, in primitive Church, 96 ; in Montanism, 97.  
 Prophets, their place in the ministry, in Apostolic Age, 96 ; in the *Didache*, 274 ; in Hermas, 276 ; succeeded by bishops, 276 ; and by readers, 276.  
 Prudentius, on worship of Cybele, 17 ; on martyrdom of Peter, 154.  
 Ptolemaeus, leader of Valentinian sect, 224 ; uses our Gospels, 251.

QUADRATUS, apology of, 169.  
 Quartodecimans, 87, *et seq.*  
 Quintilla the Montanist, 96.

RAMSAY, W. M., theory as to early persecution criticised, 107, *et seq.*; 155.

Rationalism, present condition of, p. v., 70.

Readers, office of, 276.

Renan, on Paschal controversy, 91 ; on Ignatius, 128 ; on Polycarp, 134 ; on Ebionism, 204 ; on Gnostic rites, 236.

Resurrection of Christ, Rationalism on, 44 ; commemoration of, on Sundays, 44, 285 ; at Paschal festival, 92.

*Revelation. See Apocalypse.*

Réville, on the origin of the ministry, 272.

Righteousness, as taught by St Paul, 60 ; by St John, 82.

Ritual of Baptism, 237 ; of the Eucharist, 292.

Roman Empire, unity of, 1 ; moral condition of, 3 ; primitive religion of, 6 ; foreign cults, 15.

*Romans, Epistle to*, opposed to Antinomianism, 62, *et seq.*; silent as to St Peter, 144.

Rome, Church of, relations with Montanism, 100, 161 ; foundation of, 144 ; language of, 146 ; creeds in, 146, 238 ; bishops of, 151 ; authority of, 157 ; theology of, 190 ; Marcion at, 229 ; ministry in, 275, 276 ; primitive worship of, 292.

SACRAMENTS, 41, 47 ; described as "mysteries," 237, 283 ; celebration of, 282, *et seq.*

Sadducees, attitude towards Christians, 49.

Saints, idea of communion with, 291.

Samaria, rebuilding of, 198 ; Gnosticism at, 221, 223.

Schechter, on Jewish idea of God, 76.  
*Sibylline Oracle (Third)*, 26.

Simon Magus, 221, 223.

Slavery at Rome, 4.

Soter, bishop of Rome, 153.

Spirit, descent of, 39 ; manifestations of, 41 ; St John's teaching on, 81 ; term sometimes used of Christ's divine nature, 141, 189 ; working by means of the ministry, 269.

Stephen, discourse of, 52.

Sunday. *See Lord's Day.*

Symeon, bishop of Jerusalem, 197, 199.

Symmachus, translator of the Bible, 214.

Synoptic gospels, Christology of, 37 ; authenticity of, 259 ; date of, 294.

- TACITUS, on persecution of Christians, 105, 107.
- Tatian, as an Apologist, 180 ; his *Diatessaron*, 249.
- Teacher, office of, in *Didache*, 274 ; the office assumed by other ministers, 274 ; in *Hermas*, 276.
- Tertullian, on Paganism, 7, 12 ; on persecution of Christians, 111 ; as a Montanist, 96, 100 ; on the Roman see, 150, 152, 157 ; as an Apologist, 169 ; on Ebionism, 211 ; on Gnosticism, 224, 240, 251 ; on Person of Christ, 234 ; on fasting communion, 289 ; on the Agape, 289.
- Theophilus, as an Apologist, 184 ; as a theologian, 189.
- Thyatira, Montanism at, 99.
- Titus, emperor of Rome, treatment of Jews and Christians, 111.
- Trajan, treatment of Christians, 107, 115, 116.
- Trinity, first use of term, 189.
- Twelve, their relations with Paul 68, *et seq.*, 134.
- UNITY of the Church, in St Paul, 266.
- VALENTINUS the Gnostic, his doctrinal system, 224, *et seq.* ; his use of the Gospels, 251.
- Vespasian, treatment of Jews, 200.
- Virgin, the Blessed. *See Mary.*
- WEIZSÄCKER, relation to Baur, 70 ; on *St John's Gospel*, 77 ; on the ministry, 276.
- Wisdom, Book of*, doctrine of, 26.
- Worship, in early Church at Jerusalem, 47 ; in the Church at large, 280, *et seq.* ; of saints repudiated, 291.
- ZEPHYRINUS, bishop of Rome, 100, 161.
- Zoticus of Comane, 99.

THE  
**Popular Biblical Library.**

*Full Crown 8vo. Price 3/6*

A SERIES OF VOLUMES on BIBLICAL SUBJECTS written by able and well-known Scholars, and designed so that, whilst helpful to the student, they will be of great interest to the general reader.

**VOL. I. THE HERODS.** By Dean FARRAR

"Full of interest."—*The Times*.

"This fascinating book should take its place as the ablest text-book on the subject with which it deals."—*Aberdeen Journal*.

"It is alike an instructive and entrancing book."—*The Christian*.

"Dean Farrar has written few more fascinating volumes than this . . . which covers the period between the close of the Old Testament Canon and the opening of the New, so that the book serves a double purpose."—*Methodist Times*.

**VOL. II. WOMEN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT:** Studies in Womanhood.\*

By the REV. R. F. HORTON, M.A., D.D.

"A series of unusually beautiful 'Studies in Womanhood.'"—*Freeman*.

"One of the freshest and most interesting books the season has produced."—*Free Press*.

**VOL. III. THE HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY.**

By the REV. LEIGHTON PULLAN, M.A.

*Fellow and Lecturer of St John Baptist College, Oxford;  
Lecturer in Theology at Oriel College and Queen's College.*

---

To be followed by volumes of a similar character by—Professor A. H. SAYCE, M.A.; Canon RAWLINSON; Principal WHITEHOUSE; Professor IVERACH, D.D.; Professor PATERSON, B.D.; and other Writers.

SERVICE & PATON, 5 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

**NOW READY. Extra crown 8vo, cloth. Price 6s.**

# **Our Churches**

## **And Why We Belong to Them**

BY

**REV. CANON KNOX LITTLE, M.A.**  
Church of England (High)

**REV. PREBENDARY WEBB-PEPLOE**  
Church of England (Evangelical)

**REV. R. F. HORTON, M.A., D.D.**  
Congregational Church

**REV. RICHARD GLOVER, D.D.**  
Baptist Church

**REV. JOHN TELFORD, B.A.**  
Methodist Church

**THOMAS HODGKIN, D.C.L., Ph.D.**  
Society of Friends

**REV. PROFESSOR JOHN HERKLESS**  
Established Church of Scotland

**REV. WALTER ROSS TAYLOR, D.D.**  
Free Church of Scotland

**REV. ALEX. R. MACEWEN, D.D.**  
United Presbyterian Church

**REV. PRINCIPAL T. C. EDWARDS, D.D., and**

**REV. JOHN OWEN**  
Welsh Calvinistic Church

This is a volume on the present position, individually, and in relation to one another, of the principal Churches in this country, written by prominent representatives of each, as above.

---

**SERVICE & PATON**

**5 HENRIETTA STREET, LONDON, W.C.**

New Book by the

Rev. ANDREW MURRAY

# WITHIN; Or, THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU.

*Small Crown 8vo, price One Shilling.*

“Four charming Addresses, full of spiritual beauty and light.”—*The Freeman.*

“This little book should be in the hands of all who are seeking an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom.”—*Christian Commonwealth.*

“Written in Mr Murray’s usual clear and forcible style.”—*Rest and Reaping.*

“Every reader will be helped by the perusal of these Addresses on the inner life.”—*The Christian.*



## Best Methods of Promoting Spiritual Life

*By the late* PHILLIPS BROOKS,  
Bishop of Massachusetts.

*With Portrait. Fcap. 8vo, 1s. 6d.*

---

“Sets forth great truths in a striking form.”—*The Christian.*

SERVICE & PATON  
5 HENRIETTA STREET, LONDON, W.C.



NEW EDITION OF THE ROMANCES OF  
**Nathaniel Hawthorne**

WITH INTRODUCTIONS BY  
MONCURE D. CONWAY, L.H.D.

With Eight Illustrations by **F. H. TOWNSEND.**

Printed on deckle-edged paper, with gilt top, cloth extra.

*Price 3s. 6d. net.*

NOW READY.

I. THE SCARLET LETTER.

II. THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES.

**I**T is universally acknowledged that Nathaniel Hawthorne is the greatest writer that America, and one of the greatest that any country, has produced. In spite of this fact no adequate edition of his works has been published either here or in America, and it is with this in view that the publishers are issuing the present edition.

“A lovely edition.”—*The British Weekly.*

“This edition has everything to recommend it. It is beautifully printed and illustrated, tastefully bound, and it is issued at a moderate price.”—*The Westminster Gazette.*

“The best edition.”—*The Bookman.*

---

NEW AND HANDSOME EDITION OF  
**The Lady of the Lake**

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

With Introduction by **ANDREW LANG**, and fully Illustrated by  
**C. E. BROCK.**

*Large crown 8vo, extra cloth, full gilt side and back, and with gilt edges.*

*Price 6s. Also full French morocco, 7s. 6d.*

“An artistic edition and a dainty gift-book.”—*The Times.*

“Capitally illustrated.”—*The Scotsman.*

“A choice edition.”—*The Pall Mall Gazette.*

“Printed in large type on fine paper, with exceedingly tasteful binding, it would be difficult to find a more attractive gift-book.”—*Westminster Gazette.*

SERVICE & PATON, LONDON, W.C.

# The Illustrated English Library

Price **2/6** each.

**BY W. M. THACKERAY.**

Illustrated by CHRIS. HAMMOND.

THE HISTORY OF HENRY ESMOND.      THE NEWCOMES.  
THE HISTORY OF PENDENNIS.      VANITY FAIR.

**BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË.**

Illustrated by F. H. TOWNSEND.

JANE EYRE. An Autobiography. | SHIRLEY. A Tale.

**BY CHARLES KINGSLEY.**

HYPATIA. Illustrated by LANCELOT SPEED.

**BY LORD LYTTON.**

THE LAST OF THE BARONS. Illustrated by FRED. PEGRAM.  
THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII. Illustrated by LANCELOT SPEED.

**BY CHARLES LEVER.**

CHARLES O'MALLEY. Illustrated by ARTHUR RACKHAM.

**BY SIR WALTER SCOTT.**

THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR. Illustrated by FRED. PEGRAM.  
IVANHOE. Illustrated by C. E. BROCK.  
OLD MORTALITY. Illustrated by SIDNEY PAGET.  
THE PIRATE. Illustrated by E. J. SULLIVAN.  
ROB ROY. Illustrated by F. H. TOWNSEND.

*Just Issued.*

THE CAXTONS. By Lord LYTTON. Illusted. by CHRIS. HAMMOND.  
CRANFORD. By Mrs. GASKELL. Illustrated by H. M. BROCK.  
THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD. By OLIVER GOLDSMITH. Illus-  
trated by C. E. BROCK.

*To be followed by many others.*

“Charmingly illustrated.”

“Exquisitely printed.”

—The Magazine of Art.

—Black and White.

“Tastefully bound.”—Westminster Gazette.

SERVICE & PATON, HENRIETTA STREET, W.C.

## THE BRONTËS: Fact and Fiction.

By ANGUS M. MACKAY, B.A. Crown 8vo, Buckrum,  
with Deckle Edge, Gilt Top, Price 3s. 6d.

THIS volume contains new matter regarding the Brontë Sisters, and especially throws light on the secret tragedy in Charlotte Brontë's life, which had so remarkable an effect in quickening and directing her genius, and which hitherto has not been frankly discussed. It also deals exhaustively with the question of the reliability of "The Brontës in Ireland."

CONTENTS.—I. FRESH LIGHT ON BRONTË BIOGRAPHY. The Brontë Family Group—The Religious Views of the Novelists—Charlotte Brontë's Secret.—II. A CROP OF BRONTË MYTHS. The Genealogical Chart—The Alleged Originals of *Wuthering Heights*—Hugh II. (the Paragon)—The Irish Uncles and Aunts of the Novelists—The Reviewer and the Avenger—The asserted Irish Origin of the Brontë Novels—Prunty *v.* Brontë—Sources of Error—*The Brontës in Ireland*, and the Critics.

### OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

"Energetic and well-written essays."—*The Times*.

"Full of original and excellent criticism."—*Daily Chronicle*.

"Extremely intelligent and well reasoned."—*Glasgow Herald*.

"Mr Mackay's little book ought to find a place on every shelf devoted to Brontë literature."—*St James's Gazette*

"Another volume on the irrepressible subject . . . the most vigorous and acutely controversial of the whole long series . . . Mr Mackay's arguments are admirable."—*Saturday Review*.

"Interesting and valuable in a very high degree. . . . The story, as told here, is full of beauty and pathos, and throws a world of light on the most powerful and striking portions of many of Charlotte Brontë's productions."—*Liverpool Mercury*.

SERVICE & PATON, 5 HENRIETTA ST., LONDON, W.C



17 DUE





